By Silence God is Betrayed

On the Question of Relations between the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and the Moscow Patriarchate

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No man can serve two masters: for he will hate the one, and love the other: or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (Mt. 6: 24)

Introduction

"The People Forgot God - That is the Reason for All That Happened"

Thanks to the mission of the holy Prince Vladimir Equal to the Apostles, who accepted the Gospel and Christ as the most precious and singular thing man can possess, and to which he must submit and serve to the end, Russia was illumined by the radiant light of Christ. Rus' was adorned with a multitude of those who struggled for piety. These things brought to fruition all aspects of its Orthodox culture.

However, in time, these sublime pages of our history were darkened by a decline in piety and by a tragic schism. Just like the prodigal son in the Gospel, our intelligentsia went to a far-off country, with a purse full of national values and inspired by the Holy Spirit, but they returned home with false values. In Russia, ideas appeared which gradually poisoned Russian man with the venom of unbelief. Just as He had once done for Nineveh, our long-suffering and most merciful Lord sent His prophets to warn our people and to call them to repentance before it was too late. The saints of Russia have always maintained that true faith in Christ, membership in the Body of Christ, His Holy Orthodox Church with its life-giving Mysteries, is the one thing most essential for the Russian people. Our prophets called for a total turning to God in repentance as the only way for the Russian people to preserve themselves as a Christian nation.

The precision with which our prophets foresaw the full scale and horrors of the coming catastrophe is staggering. Long before the beginning of the Russian holocaust, St. Seraphim of Sarov beheld the following terrifying vision:

> "More than half a century will pass. Then evil ones will lift their heads high. This will happen without fail: The Lord, seeing the unrepented evil of their hearts, will allow them their undertakings for a short time, but their sickness will fall upon their own heads, and the untruth of their pernicious plans will descend upon them. The Russian land will be stained with rivers of blood...
>
> "[...] Before the birth of the Antichrist a long and great war and a horrifying revolution which will exceed all human imagination in its most horrible bloodshed will take place in Russia. The revolts of Ryazin, Pugachev, the French Revolution will be as nothing compared

to what will happen in Russia. Many people faithful to their Motherland will be destroyed, there will be looting of Church property and sacking of monasteries; the churches of the Lord... All be defiled; there will be destruction of wealthy people of means and looting of their properties. Rivers of Russian blood will flow...

"[...] Great tribulations will befall the Russian land. Bishops of God's Church, and other clergymen will fall away from the purity of Orthodoxy, and for this, the Lord will severely punish them."

In one of his sermons, delivered during the revolutionary year 1905, St. John of Kronstadt warned:

"Russia, if you fall away from your Faith, as many members of the intelligentsia have already fallen away, you will no longer be Russia or Holy Russia. If the Russian people do not repent, the end of the world will be at hand. God will take away the pious Tsar, and in his place will send a scourge in the person of the ungodly: cruel, false leaders who will inundate the whole land with blood and tears" (*Anniversary Anthology of the St. John of Kronstadt Fund,* [Utica, N.Y. 1958]).

These and other fiery sermons and calls to repentance made no impression upon the heart of Russian man. A national tragedy hitherto unheard of in all human history was played out. In the person of the atheistic Bolsheviks, Russia's dark elements bestirred themselves, and a blasphemous, accursed Russia arose. In his Templeton Speech (London, 1983), Alexander Solzhenitsyn spoke of how the Russian catastrophe was explained to him when he was a child:

"More than fifty years ago, when I was still a boy, I heard various people give the following explanation for the great upheavals which befell Russia: 'The people forgot God, which is why everything has happened.'"

Since then, laboring to write a history of our revolution, for close to half a century, I read hundreds of books, collected hundreds of eyewitness accounts, and have myself written eight volumes attempting to clarify this collapse. Today, when asked to give a short explanation of the principal reason for this destructive Revolution which has swallowed up to sixty million of our people, I cannot express it more precisely than to repeat: "The people forgot God; that is why everything has happened."

A few years ago, the Millennium of Russia's Conversion to Christianity was solemnly observed. Various committees and congresses labored, scholarly treatises were written, books and journals were published, coins and medals were struck to immortalize the accomplishment of St. Vladimir, enlightener of Russia.

However, in all this, the one most important thing was omitted: repentance, the people's cry of lamentation for the falling away from God which led to the catastrophe of the Revolution.

Blessed Archbishop John (Maximovich), a true saint of our days, expressed this idea in 1938:

> "The misfortune which has befallen Russia is a direct result of her grievous sins, and the rebirth of Russia can come about only after she cleanses herself of these sins. However, to this day there has been no real repentance. The transgressions committed have obviously not been repudiated, and many active participants in the Revolution still maintain that at that time it was not possible to act otherwise. As there has been no direct condemnation of the February Revolution, the uprising against God's anointed, the Russian people continue to share in that sin, especially when they defend the results of the Revolution" (*Acts of the Second Pan-Diaspora Council*, [Belgrade, Yugoslavia, 1938], pp. 149-150).

One can confidently say that the schisms within the Church are the result of this apostasy, this falling away from God. Bearing this in mind, it is imperative that Christ's Church in Russia now fulfill its primary mission: the call for national repentance. The fulfillment of this commandment is first and foremost incumbent upon the archpastors and pastors.

If, however, they are obstinate in falsehood, the people of God not only can, but are obligated to raise their voice in defense of Christ's Truth. They also bear the responsibility for canonical order in the Church itself. St. John Chrysostom urges the faithful not to entrust everything to the clergy alone, but to care for the Church themselves. It is sinful and even criminal for parish priests and their flocks to distance themselves from their responsibility for the spiritual paths of the Church by hiding behind false humility, saying "The bishop knows better than we do," "The good father did not give his blessing to do this or that." The laity is not simply a passive body to be governed, a body whose sole duty is to submit to the hierarchy. The Mysteries

of Baptism and Chrismation are a special kind of ordination to the Christian calling. According to the Apostle Peter, the laity are in a certain sense also invested with priestly rank: *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people...* (I Pet. 2: 9)

It is sufficient to recall the remarkable passage from the 1848 Encyclical of the Eastern Patriarchs, which states:

> "Among us, neither Patriarchs nor Councils could ever introduce anything new. For us the guardian of piety is the very body of the Church, that is, the people *(laos)* themselves, whoever desire to preserve their Faith unchanged and consistent with the Faith of their fathers."

The Church is our common heritage, and it requires our common care, our personal participation. Can he who loves the Church, who desires the best for it, who contemplates its future, remain indifferent to its calling: "My child, come hither and labor in My vineyard'?

May our prayer be as the prayer written by a group of anonymous Orthodox Christians who, soon after the Catastrophe of 1917, were able to evaluate correctly what had happened to Russia:

> "I believe, O Lord, and I confess that Thou art sending fire and trials that we may emerge cleansed and transfigured, prepared for a renewal of our lives. I believe, O Lord, that our homeland is passing through a crucible of tribulation to cleanse it from the accumulated unrighteousness, and to be reborn, to meet our Lord.
>
> "I believe that in the midst of tempests and fire Thou coverest us with the wings of Thine infinite loving kindness, and that Thou art leading us through the Golgotha of redemption towards Thine ineffable light. Mysterious are Thy ways, O Lord. Thou alone knowest when our cup will come to be drained to the dregs and when the radiant hour of our resurrection will come. Thy will be done!"

Schism and Its Elimination

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Eph. 6: 12)

Schisms cause deep spiritual anguish, especially when one recalls the high-priestly prayer of the Savior, uttered on the eve of His passion. One of the central moments of this prayer is His call for unity: ... That they all may be one: as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in thee that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou, hast sent Me. (In. 17: 21) This was the Savior's prayer for His Church. Schisms increase the agony of the divine Sufferer and only gladden the enemy of our salvation.

It is indisputable that maximal effort must be applied to overcome schism and to achieve unity. This is what all Orthodox Russian people desire. It is essential that all members of the Church take this path. This was pointed out in an Encyclical of the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (October 1991):

> "...Schism may only be overcome by humble prayer, repentance and brotherly love towards all who fell during the difficult time of persecutions, and towards those who have lost the way in the present time ... The rebirth of Faith ... must begin with our own personal spiritual renewal, with repentance and cleansing of each of us from the impurity of sin and from self-justification."

The pure in heart shall see God, i.e., order to know God and live in Him, we need to cleanse our thoughts, feelings and our very lives, "Through such cleansing we shall begin "certain pre-conciliar mutual understanding, a clarification of our errors and fallings away from the Truth." After such preparation, a Pan-Russian Council free of all "allegiance" and interference by alien powers and their influence, will be possible. This Council, convened in accordance with ecclesiastical principles, will judge the history of our Church over the past decades, and will be able to chart its future fate.

"We call upon all the children of the Orthodox Church to come together for this truly grace-bearing pre-conciliar process with a profound awareness of our weakness and sinfulness, trusting in God's mercy and assistance. For in our humiliations the Lord remembered us (Ps. 135: 23)."

It is clear that the hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad understand this pre-conciliar process as the way toward true unity, rather than toward an external unification achieved at any price.

For a long time, I could not understand why certain representatives of the Russian émigré community who have invested so much of their time and efforts in the struggle against communism, today consciously allow themselves to disregard the horrible results of Communist pestilence, which continue to rend the Russian Church. What prompts them to demand that the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad reunite with the Moscow Patriarchate whatever the cost, and under any condition? Is not the Moscow Patriarchate one of the last institutions still bearing the imprint of this Communist disease?

Does not the explanation lie in the fact that opposition to Communism by yesterday's anti-Communists was only a superficial and political one, rather than profoundly spiritual? Perhaps, after so many years of concerted political struggle, their strength has become so drained that they cannot perceive the terrible results of the Moscow Patriarchate's submission to the militantly atheistic regime? Have not some taken the path of least resistance because their spiritual sensibility has been so blunted that they see compromise, lies, and other perverted phenomena, as normal?

Some well-meaning individuals, who have too readily forgotten our contemporary Church history, say that now is not the time to criticize the Patriarch and the Patriarchate, but rather the time to help them. All this is vaguely reminiscent of an attitude predominant in certain émigré circles both after World War II, and later, during the Khrushchev "thaw".

Yesterday's Communist Party members, their previous ideology only superficially altered, continue to occupy leading positions in the Russian Government and in broad-based social organizations, under the banners of other political parties and new ideologies. As before, the terrible heritage of Communism makes itself felt wherever yesterday's Communists continue to play a role.

To this day the evil sown in Russia by the devil and by his loyal followers, the Bolsheviks, continues to torment the Russian Church. We must not pretend that this is not so. The sacred Scripture commands us to oppose evil: *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil ... purify your hearts, ye double minded.* (Jas. 4: 7-8)

"To close ones eyes to the evil of the past, and, what is more, to justify it, would mean giving it another chance in the future," wrote Fr. Alexander Men. "History, especially recent history, lives among us. Its roots lie in our consciousness, in our everyday way of life, in our vocabulary. Therefore, it is one of our essential objectives to understand it, to evaluate the terrible events which have shaken the world throughout almost our entire century. But we cannot understand these events and evaluate them if we do not have a reference point and a scale of values, moral criteria" (*Sovetskaya Kultura*, Oct. 21, 1989 [in Russian]).

The "evil of the past", which some try to justify, killed the author of the lines quoted above.

The facts of the Moscow Patriarchate's history are not separated from us by years. What was sown in the past will grow in the present and in the future.

To continue our discourse on the contemporary life of the Church of Russia, we must clarify both "Sergianism", and the phenomena which have brought about the crisis in which the Russian Church finds itself. Let us, therefore, turn to a few pages of history.

A Few Pages from the History of Sergianism

Do not excuse yourself by lack of knowledge, for he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten (Lk 12:48) because he did not learn.

- St. John of the Ladder

It became clear to the Bolsheviks in the early 1920, while Patriarch Tikhon was still alive, that it was impossible, and even disadvantageous, to physically destroy the Orthodox Church. They then decided to adopt other tactics. The militant atheists set as their goal to gain dominance over the entire episcopate and clergy, and then to force the Church leadership into collaboration with their regime for the good of that regime.

Among the documents unearthed by the Parliamentary Commission of Russia's Supreme Soviet in its investigation into the reasons for and circumstances of the abortive coup of August 1991, were reports of activities of the Fourth Department of the Fifth Directorate of the KGB. These reports constitute a rich source of material for historians studying the fate of the Russian Orthodox Church during the Soviet period.

Some of these documents describe recruitment of clergy into the service of government intelligence agencies. According to these records, a policy of co-opting clergy in fact began during the very first years of Soviet rule. In this regard, one CheKa [forerunner of the NKVD and KGB] report, dated 1921, states:

> "The question of informers and intelligence work among the clergy is a most painful one for the CheKa, both because it is difficult to implement, and because for the most part, the CheKa has to date devoted little attention to it...
>
> Without any doubt, we must stir it up and move it from dead center. For more rapid and reliable implementation, it is imperative that, from the outset, we undertake the following measures:
>
> 1. Use for our own purposes the very members of the clergy, especially those occupying important ministerial positions in the life of the Church, e.g., bishops, metropolitans, etc. ordering them, under threat of stern measures, to issue to the clergy directives of benefit to us, e.g., discontinuance of mass demonstrations against government decrees, and protests against the closing of monasteries, etc.

2. To study the character of various bishops and vicar bishops, encouraging their desires and plans.

3. It is proposed to co-opt informers within the clergy after becoming somewhat acquainted with the Church milieu and elucidating the specific character traits of each individual minister of the cult. While there may be various ways to gather this information, it is best done by seizing their correspondence during searches, and through personal acquaintance with the clergy's milieu.

It is imperative to have informers among the clergy who are motivated by a desire for material gain, as this may make it possible to come to an agreement with them. It is highly unlikely to count on their good will towards the Soviet authorities. Their acceptance of money or other material enticements will tie them to us more effectively in another way: *they will become eternal slaves of the CheKa, afraid to have their cooperation with us made public* [emphasis supplied].

Co-opting informers through fear of imprisonment and labor camps for the least infractions speculation, violations of the law, disobedience to officials, etc. - has been and must continue to be practiced.

These means are somewhat unreliable, undependable, and can be useful only if the potential informer is weak-willed and of flawed character. We must address ourselves to the quality of the informer, not the quantity of his output. Only when we have inducted such good informers, and when such induction has been done with care, can we hope to gain helpful materials from various sources [Central KGB Archives, folio 1, file 5, No. 360, 1921, Secret Dept, 6. Signed by the Deputy Chief of the CheKa].

In this utterly cynical document, agents of the CheKa admit that in 1921 it was hard to find informers within the Russian Orthodox Church ("a most painful [question] for the CheKa"). Later, this degrading role was willingly accepted by the group of clerics who had organized themselves into the so-called "Living" or "Renovationist" church. These were priests who formed part of the left wing of the Church even before the Revolution of 1917, as well as persons enticed by the prospect of their own sort of (government-subsidized) ecclesiastical career within Communist society and who therefore decided to launch themselves into the role of politico-religious opportunists. The Communists supported the activities of the Renovationists in all possible ways, because they recognized in them obedient tools which could help them destroy the Church from within.

However, the faithful gave no support to the Renovationists, but remained loyal to the Patriarch-confessor Tikhon. During that period, many opponents of the Renovationist movement were brought to trial, treated cruelly in CheKa dungeons and exiled *en masse* to the Solovki prison and to Siberia.

The failure of the "Living Church" movement was more than compensated for by the Communist rulers, who fully achieved their objectives in their entente with Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky), a former adherent of the Renovationist movement and Deputy *Locum Tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne. Before Sergius issued his infamous Declaration of 1927, St. Nectarius of Optina remarked: "Even though he [Metropolitan Sergius] repented, the poison remains within him."[ii]

On July 27, 1927, Metropolitan Sergius' infamous "Epistle to Pastors and the Flock" (the Declaration) was published.[iii] In this Epistle, the actual objectives of the Bolsheviks, aimed at the annihilation of all religion, were camouflaged, by linking the interests of the anti-religious regime of the USSR with those of the people, and with the name of the homeland:

> "We must show not only by words, but by actions, that it is not only those who are indifferent to Orthodoxy who can be dedicated citizens of the Soviet Union, loyal to the Soviet authorities, but even its [Orthodoxy's] most zealous adherents. We desire to be Orthodox and simultaneously to recognize the Soviet Union as our civic motherland; her joys and successes being our joys and successes, and her misfortunes our misfortunes. Every blow directed against the Union ... will be regarded by us as a blow aimed at us."

In his Declaration, Metropolitan Sergius proposed that those among the clergy who did not wish to accept his conditions step aside and resign. The Declaration contained warnings directed at the émigré Russian clergy. For the first time, in the name of the Moscow Patriarchate, which had been "legalized" by the Soviet government, gratitude was expressed to the Soviet government "for its attention to the needs of the Orthodox populace" (How many more times we will hear similar words uttered by hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate!).

Considering it unnecessary to consult with the legitimate *locum tenens*, Metropolitan Peter, who was incarcerated in a labor camp, or even with those bishops who were then still free, Metropolitan Sergius by his Declaration unilaterally accepted, on behalf of the Church, the Soviet conditions for legalization of the Church. Metropolitan Sergius totally ignored the 34th

Apostolic Canon, which all Orthodox archpastors are obligated to obey. In part this canon reads:

> "...But let not such a one [*i.e.* the bishop recognized as the first] do anything without the advice and consent and approval of all. For thus will there be concord..."

The "wise elder" (as Metropolitan Sergius was praised by his followers) usurped authority within the Church and, having crudely violated the canons, placed all subsequent decisions and actions of the Moscow Patriarchate in question.

So-called "normal relations" were officially established between the Sergianist hierarchy and the Soviet government. In reality, the central Church administration of the Moscow Patriarchate not only fell under the control of the Communist dictatorship, but became its obedient tool in both domestic and foreign policy.

At that time, many found the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius to be either a cowardly, criminal compromise of his hierarchical conscience, or an act exceeding his ecclesiastical competence. Metropolitan Sergius received numerous written protests. Delegations of clergy and laity came to him and begged him to reverse his course of action "while there was still time", and to yield his office to a more courageous and staunch hierarch. According to Metropolitan John (Snychev), in some dioceses as many as 90% of the parishes refused to accept this Declaration, and returned it to its author.

Metropolitan Sergius was warned that his compromise would draw the Russian Church into the orbit of Soviet politics. He was reminded that the Church's path, like the earthly path of Christ, is not a path of accommodation, but is the way of Golgotha. Many of those who warned Metropolitan Sergius suffered their own Golgotha, forming the countless multitude of New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia. (This host was canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in 1981.) Dr. Ivan M. Andreyevsky,[I.M. Andreev] a participant in the events of that time, testifies that "by taking into account the quantity and the weight of the spirituality of those protesting [against the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius - V.P.], it is possible to evaluate the volume, depth and moral strength of this protest."[iv]

After carefully reviewing the "Declaration" of the deputy *locum tenens* of the patriarchal throne and of the provisional patriarchal synod, and taking into account the fact that the Church administration in Russia was held

in such grievous captivity by the Church's enemies and was not free in any of its actions, the Council of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, stated the following in an Encyclical issued on September 9, 1927:

> 1) That portion of the Russian Church which is located outside Russia must sever all contact with the Moscow Church administration in view of the impossibility of maintaining normal relations with it, and because it is enslaved to the antireligious Soviet regime, which has taken away its freedom to express its will and to administer the Church canonically.
>
> 2) To free our hierarchy in Russia from bearing responsibility for the fact that the part of our Church which is outside Russia declines to recognize the Soviet regime, and until such time as we can reestablish normal relations with Russia and our Church is freed from persecution by the godless Soviet regime, the part of our Church which is outside of Russia must govern itself in accordance with the sacred canons of the Church, in accordance with the decisions of the Council of the Autocephalous Russian Orthodox Church of 1917-1918, and the resolution of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, the Holy Synod of Bishops, and the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council, dated 7/20 November 1920, with the help of the Synod of Bishops and the Council of Bishops [outside of Russia, under the chairmanship of Metropolitan Anthony [Khrapovitsky] of Kiev.
>
> 3) The portion of the Russian Church which is outside of Russia considers itself to be an inseparable and spiritually united branch of the great Church of Russia. It is not separating itself from its Mother Church, and does not deem itself to be an autocephalous Church. It continues, as before, to accept as its head the *locum tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Peter, and always commemorates his name during the divine services.
>
> 4) Should Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod resolve to exclude from the ranks of the Moscow Patriarchate's clergy the bishops and clergy outside of Russia who have refused to swear loyalty to the Soviet government, such a resolution will be noncanonical.
>
> 5) To renounce forcefully the proposal of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod that we sign an oath of loyalty to the Soviet government, as non-canonical and extremely detrimental to the Holy Church, both in Russia and abroad.

An analogous position towards Metropolitan Sergius and his Declaration was taken by a great many bishops within Soviet Russia. The bishop confessors who were imprisoned in the Solovki Monastery had this to say about Metropolitan Sergius' Declaration (Sept. 27, 1927):

> a) ... The idea that the Church must submit to civil directives is expressed in such a categorical and unequivocal way that it can easily be understood in the sense of a complete interweaving of Church and state ...
>
> b) ... The Declaration offers to the government "gratitude on behalf of all the people for its attention to the spiritual needs of the Orthodox populace." Such an expression of gratitude from the mouth of the head of the Russian Church cannot be sincere, and therefore is not an expression worthy of the Church…
>
> c) ... Without any reservation, the Declaration of the Patriarchate accepts the official version and places all the blame for the painful conflicts between Church and state squarely on the Church ...
>
> d) The threat to suspend the émigré clergy [from serving the divine services] violates the resolution of the Council of 1917-1918, dated 3/16 August 1918, which explained the complete canonical inadmissibility of such punishments and rehabilitated all persons who had been deposed for political crimes in the past (i.e. Arseny Matsievlch and Fr. Grigory Petrov), (Lev Regelson. *The Tragedy of the Russian Church*, Paris, [YMCA-Press, 1977] p. 436 [in Russian]).

It is appropriate to cite here several of the opinions of Bishop Damascene of Glukhovsk concerning Metropolitan Sergius' Declaration. Bishop Damascene was an illustrious bishop who enjoyed unquestioned spiritual authority.[v]

To the two questions posed by Bishop Damascene to Metropolitan Sergius:

> "1. Do you consider your decision to be an expression of the conciliar consciousness of the entire episcopate of the Russian Church? And,
>
> 2. Do you have any basis for considering your personal authority to be sufficient to oppose the multitude of venerable bishops who totally reject your point of view?"

The deputy *locum tenens* made no reply.

Bishop Damascene, speaking on behalf of numerous bishops, called Metropolitan Sergius' action an act of treason which profoundly troubled their souls.

"In the living body of the Church, [wrote Bishop Damascene], among the mass of the faithful, a profound process of spiritual alteration is going on with regard to the Church's principal teaching on salvation. And it is your very Declaration which has elicited this process ..."

Those who had not broken relations with Metropolitan Sergius were, according to Bishop Damascene, "involuntary participants in his sin." Vladika Damascene further wrote:

> Believers, troubled to the depth of their souls by your betrayal of the commandments of Christ and the Truth of Orthodoxy, have turned away from you and from all those who are with you. They prefer not to go to churches where your name is commemorated, and to wait for two years to take communion for fear of being party to your sin. With fear and hope, they await the voice of the exiled Church ...
>
> Your sin is, moreover, the internal falsehood of the Declaration, which is itself based on fear. It is only in such a light that one can understand the eighth verse of the twenty-first chapter of the Book of Revelations, in which the "cowardly" are placed among unbelievers, murderers and fornicators...
>
> How dreadful to see how you have shaken and undermined the authority of the Church hierarchy by your Declaration, what an abundant harvest is being reaped by our foes, how many believers, seeing no good example for themselves in their own pastors, have come to doubt the eternal Truth, and how many of them have for this reason forsaken the Church and are perishing in the swamps of rebellion and the eddies of sectarianism!.. Oh, Vladika, think of the myriad of lost souls who at the Dread Judgment will be able to blame you for their ruin!...
>
> The entire Church awaits from Your Eminence a public statement as to whether you will take into account the opinion of the overwhelming majority of hierarchs...
>
> The extinguishing of the spirit of faith among the masses, the disparaging of the salvific ideals of the Church, the ignoring by pastors

of their duty, the resulting increase of iniquity and the "love of many waxing cold..."

In this you should not lose sight of the fact that the more you work for Satan, the more he will demand new sacrifices to himself, for such is the nature of evil. The strength of the Church, and the source of its constant renewal, is not outside it, but rather within it ...

Everything is happening completely contrary to all your human calculations and hopes ...

There will be no erasing you from the pages of history [of the Church]: either the Russian Church will inscribe your name among the multitude of its confessors, or it will relegate it to the list of those who have betrayed its world-saving ideals ...

Heed the universal voice of the faithful, for it is unquestionably also the "voice of God"... Stare into the chasm of the inevitable schism which is opening before you. Shudder at your responsibility for extinguishing the fire of faith among the masses,... and renounce your course of action, your compromises. *Rescind your Declaration* [emphasis supplied] as having been a personal error, exceeding your competence. Show yourself to the world as a herald of Eternal Righteousness and the true love of the Gospel; cast aside sophistry and calculation, and stand fast on the path of staunch confession of Christ. Do not fear the possibility of more bitter tribulations and trials for the Church (they are inevitable, and your compromises only belittle their significance), for the Church will rejoice, ascending to a new Golgotha, so that even amid its sufferings it will bless your name, knowing that through your efforts the principal source of its decay has been destroyed...

Alas! Should you, Your Eminence, persist in your course of open disregard for the voice of the Church, she will renounce you as a confederate of its executioners and resume her way of the cross...

We beseech you, we entreat you, Vladika, we are still at your side and are prepared to extend our hand to you... If you disregard this appeal and fail to retract your Declaration, then follow your inclination further, *but without us" (Pred Sudom Bozhiim: Russkaya Pravoslavnaya Zarubezhnaya Tserkov i Moskovskaya Patriarkhiya*, Montreal, Canada: Monastery Press, 1990), pp. 12-27, [in Russian].

In 1933, the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia issued an Encyclical to the Russian Orthodox flock concerning the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius. It stated, in part:

> We cannot, of course, deter him [Metropolitan Sergius] from his chosen path, but we will not follow him. There is but one truth known to us, the Eternal Truth of Christ! And if they want to replace it with some other, human truth, we are prepared to cry out with St. Isaac the Syrian: "Let such truth perish!"
>
> Metropolitan Sergius has been telling us: "Only remain silent, and do not denounce the Soviet regime, for that would be a political act."
>
> "Be silent, this is the only thing I tell you, be silent," - said Ivan the Terrible to St. Philip, who continued to denounce his cruelty, and to defend the truth which the tsar was trampling underfoot. We, the bishops in exile, cannot comply with Metropolitan Sergius' wish.
>
> Christ has honored us with ordination, has called on us to be His loyal, genuine witnesses, and to do battle with Antichrist. We not only cannot side with His adversary, we cannot simply remain neutral in this confrontation; for as St. Gregory the Theologian once said 'By Silence is God Betrayed.'" (Archbishop Nikon Rklitsky*, Zhizneopisaniye Blazhenneishego Antoniya, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago*, a publication of the North American and Canadian Diocese, New York, Vol. 6, p. 298 [in Russian]).

The above-cited testimony is but an infinitesimally small part of the historical documents which have survived from those times, documents which loudly lament Metropolitan Sergius' headlong downfall and his terrible betrayal of the interests of the Church.

Did the Church have an alternative to the course chosen by Metropolitan Sergius? Yes, it did. This alternative was expressed in the "Memorandum of the Solovki Bishops" (also known as the "Epistle of the Confessors of Solovki"). It was signed on September 27, 1928, by 17 bishops languishing in the infamous concentration camp of special purpose at the Solovki Monastery. This remarkable epistle of the Solovki prisoners is not widely known in Russia because the Moscow Patriarchate has suppressed it.

Addressed to "the government of the USSR", this documentation contains not a trace of appeasement. The bishops justly declared that "in the very fundamentals of the worldviews of Church and state there *can be no internal agreement* [emphasis supplied], because "the condition of its being and the meaning of its existence are that which is categorically denied by Communism." Here are a few noteworthy excerpts from this truly historic document:

> Those who have signed this statement are fully aware of how difficult it is to establish mutually cordial relations between Church and state under current conditions, and do not feel it possible to remain silent concerning this. It would be an injustice inconsistent with the dignity of the Church, and thus pointless and unconvincing, were they to maintain that between the Orthodox Church and the governing authorities of the Soviet Republics there are no differences of opinion. This lack of agreement does not lie in what political suspicion desires to see in it or what the slander of the enemies of the Church make it out to be. The Church is not concerned with redistribution of wealth or its socialization, since it has always acknowledged such to be a prerogative of the state, for whose activity it is not responsible. Neither is the Church concerned with the organization of political power, since it chooses to exercise loyalty towards the governments of all the states in which its members live ... This disagreement lies in the irreconcilability of the teachings of the Church with materialism, the official philosophy of the Communist Party and the government of the Soviet Republics, which is guided thereby.
>
> The Church cannot achieve a rapprochement by compromise or concession, by any modifications or reinterpretation of its own religious doctrine in the spirit of Communism. Attempts undertaken to this effect by the Renovationists have been pathetic.
>
> The Orthodox Church shall never take this unworthy path. It will never reject, in whole or in part, its religious teachings, which have been winnowed by the holiness of bygone centuries, in favor of one of the ever-changing social moods. Such an irreconcilable ideological divergence between the Church and state inevitably affects the operation of these organizations. Thus, confrontation can be prevented only by introduction of an appropriate law concerning separation of Church and state, in accordance with which the Church must not hinder in

the civil government the successes of the material prosperity of the people, and the State must not inhibit the Church in its religious and moral activity.

Such a law, one of the first enacted by the Revolutionary government, became part of the Constitution of the USSR, and might to a certain degree have satisfied both sides under the altered political system. The Church has no religious motivation not to accept this legislation. The Lord Jesus Christ has directed that we render "what is Caesar's" – i.e., concern for the material welfare of the people - "unto Caesar" - i.e., the governmental authority, and He left no commandment to us, His followers, to influence the change in forms of governmental or to guide their activities. According to this doctrine and tradition, the Orthodox Church has always avoided intervention in politics and has remained obedient to the State in all things which do not touch upon the Faith.

[...] The government, both in its legislation and in the order of its administration, has not remained neutral in regard to belief or unbelief, but has most definitely sided with atheism , using all means of governmental activity to achieve its inculcation, development and dissemination, as a counterbalance to all religions.

[...] Both the approval and the censure of the government is interference in politics, as is the right to withhold approval, which can always be understood as a sign of displeasure and disapproval.

[...] *The Orthodox Church considers investigation and political denunciation completely incompatible with the dignity of a pastor* (emphasis supplied] (Lev Regelson*, Tragediya Russkoi Tserkvi* [Paris: YMCA Press, 1977), pp. 417-428 (in Russian).

On February 15, 1930, while many of the authors of the Solovki Epistle, a majority of the hierarchs, and a large number of other Russian Orthodox clergy, were incarcerated in camps, or in internal exile, languishing in miserable circumstances, Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod held a press conference, at which he responded to a number of questions posed by representatives of the press. Transcripts were then widely circulated throughout the world. Here is an excerpt:

QUESTION: Does persecution of religion really exist in the USSR, and what forms does it take?

ANSWER: There is not and never has been persecution of religion in the USSR. By virtue of the decree "On Separation of Church and State," the confession of any faith is quite free and is not persecuted by any state institution. Moreover, the latest (April 8, 1929) injunction of the All-Union Central Executive Commission and the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, entitled "On Religious Associations," totally excludes even the least semblance of any persecution of religion.

QUESTION: Is it true that atheists are closing churches, and how are the believers reacting to this?

ANSWER: Yes, indeed, some churches are being closed. However, these closures are being carried out at the request of the populace, not on the initiative of the authorities. It is sometimes accomplished by a resolution of the believers themselves. In the USSR atheists are organized into private associations, so that their demands with regard to the closure of churches are in nowise considered mandatory by government agencies.

QUESTION: Is it true that priests and believers suffer repression for their religious convictions, i.e. being arrested, exiled, etc.?

ANSWER: The repressions effected by the Soviet Government with regard to clergy and believers are applied to them on a common basis, as also to other citizens, for various anti-government offenses, and not at all for their religious convictions. It should be noted that the Church's misfortune lies in the fact that in the past, as is well known, it had formerly associated itself too closely with the monarchist social order… Regrettably, even to this day some of us have been unable to understand that there is no return to the past, and we continue to comport ourselves as political adversaries of the Soviet government...

QUESTION: It there truth to what has been published in the foreign press with regard to atrocities perpetrated by Soviet agents with regard to certain clergymen?

ANSWER: This information does not correspond to reality in any degree. All this is a complete fabrication, slander, totally unworthy of consideration by serious people (Vladimir A. Kuroedov*, Religiya i tserkov v sovetskorn obshchestve*, Moscow, 1984 [in Russian]).

An exhaustive evaluation of the press conference of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod was provided by the Solovki confessor-bishops four years before it took place. They accurately diagnosed the malady of the Moscow Patriarchate:

> The Orthodox Church cannot follow the example of the Renovationists, and attest that religion in the USSR is not subjected to any repressions, and that in no other country would it enjoy such absolute freedom. The Church will never announce to the world such a shameful falsehood, a falsehood inspired by hypocrisy, servility, or a complete indifference to the fate of religion, and a falsehood which deserves utter condemnation by its clergy. [...] ... *and the Church can never be a servant of the state* [emphasis supplied].

It is impossible to reconcile and unite these two points of view. I invite the reader to decide for himself what inspired this shameful falsehood on the part of Metropolitan Sergius. Was it hypocrisy or servility? Was it complete indifference to the fate of religion? At any rate, according to the confessor bishops at Solovki, it deserves utter condemnation, for only a renovationist could bring himself to speak in such terms.

* * *

One must call a spade a spade. Sergianism is a synonym for bearing false witness. Sergianism is false ecclesiology. Protopresbyter Mikhail Polsky, a chronicler of Orthodox martyrdom in the 20th century, writes that Metropolitan Sergius violated the ninth article of the Creed , concerning the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church:

> Nikolai (Dobronravov), Bishop of Vladimir, once said in a dispute with Metropolitan Sergius (April 7/20, 1928) that the latter had transgressed against the Apostolic nature of the Church by introducing into the Church secular rules and worldly principles; had sinned against its holiness by blaspheming the spiritual struggle of its confessors [i.e., by denying the fact that the Church is persecuted and its children are martyred - V.P.]; had sinned against its conciliar nature by administering the Church by himself, as well as by of violating its unity.
>
> [...] The Church Universal is an integral whole, and none of its members may violate the dogma of catholicity, since the Universal Church consists of many members who maintain union. Sin can be perpetrated against the Universal Church in various points, through failure to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4: 3), by independent actions which go against this binding principle.

> Therefore, anyone who places his will in opposition to the will of the whole Church, sins against the dogma of the unity of the conciliar Church. Each of its members must believe as does the Church. [...]
>
> [...] The usurpation of conciliar authority by a bishop is not just a schism, but a heresy - of singlehanded administration of the Church by a bishop who has broken away from conciliar unity...
>
> In the past, Church dogma expressed in the ninth article of the Creed was blatantly violated by the Roman Church through the personal dictatorship of its primate, who claimed supremacy over the whole of the Church. The Orthodox Catholic Church repudiated this claim and severed communion with the Roman Church ...
>
> The arbitrary action of the chief hierarch of the Russian Church [Metropolitan Sergius – V.P.] is a violation of the dogma of the catholicity of the Church (Protopresbyter Mikhail Polsky*, Kanonicheskoe polozhenie vishei tserkovnoi vlasti v SSSR i zagranitsei,* 1948, Jordanville, N.Y., pp. 79-81 [in Russian]).

Sergianism is a tragedy for the entire Russian Church. According to St. Paul, the believers are members of the one Body of Christ, regardless of where they are; *That there be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another: And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it (I Cor. 12: 25-27).* It is precisely for this reason that the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia is directly concerned with overcoming the lamentable consequences of Sergianism, as are the suffering members of the Church in Russia.

The Sorrowful Legacy of Sergianism

Thus with your blasphemous hand you chained the Church of God to a vain and worldly regime. - Khomiakov

We must also not pass over in silence the shameful and never denounced participation in the service of the "cult of personality" by the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate. In this connection, in May of 1988, on the eve of the opening of the Council of the Moscow Patriarchate, a group of Russian Orthodox Christians [Priests G. Yakunin and N. Gainov, L. Timofeev, A. Bessmertny, Z. Khrakhmalnikova, V Popkov, F. Svetov, V. Borshyov; their statement was published in the weekly *Russkaya Mysil* No. 3749, Nov. 4, 1988, p. 7 (in Russian)] addressed a written petition to Patriarch Pimen and the episcopate, proposing that they condemn this sin of idolatry.

The authors of this statement described the appalling nature of the bishops' groveling before Stalin. Here is an excerpt:

> Restored from ruin by order of Stalin at the end of World War II, the Moscow Patriarchate set about very actively burning verbal incense to the "Leader, Teacher and Friend of the workers," to the tyrant whose hands were stained with the blood of millions of innocent victims, among whom was the multitude of New Martyrs of Russia.
>
> By sermons to the believers from the pulpit, congratulatory telegrams, letters of greeting, and even prayers in church addressed to the Lord God Himself, "for the state of Russia, its Leader and its authorities," the Moscow Patriarchate sanctified this cult, hallowing it by prayer, and bestowing upon it its religious sanction.
>
> In this way, wittingly or unwittingly, the Moscow Patriarchate spiritually subverted some of its own children into the deadly sin of idolatry which was denounced by the prophets of the Old Testament, and subverted other believers into the temptation of duplicity, accommodation and compliance, at the same time alienating many of those who were on the path to the Church.
>
> The *apotheosis* of the Moscow Patriarchate's participation in the "personality cult" of Stalin was the "Commemorative Address to the Leader of the Peoples of the USSR," presented to Stalin on his 70th birthday by Patriarch Alexis I and the ruling episcopate, on behalf of the clergy and laity of the Russian Orthodox Church (see The Journal

of the Moscow Patriarchate, 1949, No. 12). One may without hesitation call this address the most ignominious document ever issued in the name of the Church, not only in the thousand years of Christianity in Russia, but in the entire history of Christianity.

At the same time that the moral and ethical standards of society were being destroyed, when perjury, denunciations, the repudiation of persecuted parents by their own children and of arrested husbands by their own wives, were all being encouraged; at the same time that the consciousness of the nation was being stripped of the concepts of charity and compassion, and a total mockery of the image and likeness of God in man was taking place, the episcopate of the Russian Church was pouring out before the deified despot their expressions of loyalty: "It is particularly precious to us that the whole world perceives the triumph of moral principles in your works, which are aimed at achieving the common good and justice."

The leaders of a Church which had been subjected to unprecedented persecution and brutal oppression, leaders many of whom had only recently been released from prison camps, jails and exile, who were fully cognizant of the extent and severity of the crimes perpetrated against the people in Russia, addressed Stalin with words of religious ecstasy.

There did not emerge from among the hierarchs of those days a new Metropolitan Philip to denounce the evil deeds of the new Ivan the Terrible. Neither did the Church find another holy passion-bearer in whose person with the sword of righteousness She might battle against the forces of evil.

The Moscow Patriarchate was unanimous in offering laudatory doxologies to the "leader of nations": "We send you our prayerful wishes for many years of life, to the joy and happiness of our great homeland, blessing your struggle of service to it, and being ourselves inspired thereby."

Does not this blessing by the hierarchs approach in the level of its sinfulness, and in its religious significance, sacrilege?

The courage to refuse to sign the Congratulatory Address was not to be found even among those hierarchs who signed against their own will, for "fear of the Jews." Since refusal would have meant sending them to their death, it is not easy to judge those bishops. However, it is dismaying to note that during the favorable time of the Khrushchev "thaw" not a single signatory of the Address expressed repentance. It is all the more dismaying since such repentance would have been accepted with complete understanding by the political leadership of the country then in power.

Not a single signatory of the 'Congratulatory Address' to Stalin is among the living, but *Behold, now is the acceptable time* (II Cor. 6:2) to cleanse our Church of the sin of idolatry.

The issue of the "personality cult" was not discussed at the Council. Speaking at a press conference held on June 9, 1988, at the close of the Local Council, Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev said that the question of condemning Stalin's personality cult was a political issue, and therefore did not fall within the competence of the Council.

Perjury is inseparable from Sergianism. The perjury of Metropolitan Sergius against the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia was repeated in later years by Patriarchs Alexis I and Pimen. A few years ago, during a period of political arrests, when hundreds of believers and political prisoners were serving terms in jails and camps, Metropolitan Alexis [the present Patriarch] announced to the whole world: "In the Soviet Union citizens are never detained for their religious or political views." (Jane Ellis, The Russian Orthodox Church [Univ. of Indiana Press, 1986], p. 426).

During the celebration of the Millennium of the Conversion of Russia to Christianity, the Progress Publishing House in Moscow distributed a book entitled *In Search of Holy Mother Russia* by Belgian writer Ludo Van Ekk. Included in this book was a lengthy interview with Metropolitan Pitirim. According to the Metropolitan, censorship in Russia does not and has never existed;[vi] the Publishing Department, which he heads, had always been able to print anything it wished, without limitations.

In the interview with Ludo Van Ekk, Metropolitan Pitirim said:

> "It was only after the Revolution of 1917 that the Church was given the freedom of which it had been deprived since the time of Peter 1. Tikhon, the new Patriarch, was an avowed enemy of Socialism. He anathematized the Soviet Authorities and openly called for the armed overthrow of the new regime. Priests called for armed insurrection. Many of them fought along with the White Army and foreign interventionists against the Soviets. Therefore they were prosecuted for criminal offenses. The Socialist State has never, I want to emphasize, never persecuted our Church or any other religion.
>
> [...] The Church has never suffered persecution, except for those priests whose activities had nothing to do with their religious duties.
>
> Both the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Church have many common objectives. Certainly, we cannot interfere with

> the business of the Communist Party. Neither can the Party interfere with the affairs of the Church. Fortunately, these two major public institutions, State and Church, maintain a peaceful coexistence and cooperate in many respects in the interest of our common socialist state (pp. 13-17).

Let us now consider a confidential report which, at the time of its revelation, had worldwide repercussions. This report, prepared for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, frankly, discussed the total control then exercised over the Church by the Council of Religious Affairs (ORA). In the West this report was published in two issues of the "Messenger of the Russian Christian Movement" [Vestnik RSKhD No. 130, 1979, and 131, 1980]. Its author, Vasilii Furov, who was then deputy chairman of the ORA, divided the Church hierarchy into three categories: bishops completely subordinate to the atheistic state, those who were not totally subordinate, and those who intentionally resisted the attempts of the CRA to counter the Church's influence and activities.

Furov identified the present Patriarch Alexis II as belonging to the first category. Furov describes this group as hierarchs:

> ...who both in word and deed conform not only their loyalty but also their patriotic allegiance to Socialist society, strictly observing the laws concerning cults, and nurture parish clergy and the faithful in the same spirit; and they have a real awareness that our State is not interested in elevating the role of religion and the Church in society, and, understanding this, they show no particular activity in expanding the influence of Orthodoxy among the populace (*Vestnik RSKhD* No. 130, p. 278).

Other documents of the CRA have been printed in the journal *Glasnost* (Moscow, No. 13, 1987), and contain information on past denunciations by the present Patriarch Alexis II against Metropolitan (later Patriarch) Pimen of Krutitsa and Kolomna. These documents, all stamped "confidential" by the CRA, reveal the major mechanisms of the interrelations between the ruling hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate and representatives of the atheistic administration.

There is not even the shadow of a doubt as to the authenticity of both the Furov Report (designated exclusively for the "eyes only" of the Communist Central Committee functionaries) and the transcripts of the present Patriarch's "cordial conversations" (denunciations). It is common knowledge that Fr. Gleb Yakunin was sentenced to a long prison term for, among other things, focusing public attention on these documents. This leak is the subject of a classified KGB

document, a letter dated Jan. 15, 1982, from V. Chebrikov, Deputy Chairman of the KGB, to M.Z. Zimyanin of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (entitled "Concerning Information Leaks from the Council of Religious Affairs of the USSR Council of Ministers," No. 97-Ch; CPSU Archive No. 01425). The conclusion of this letter states:

> "Measures are currently being taken by the Committee for State Security [KGB], to trace the channel of leakage of the above-mentioned documents out of the country and to identify the persons involved."

KGB interrogators promised Fr. Gleb Yakunin a significant reduction in his sentence in return for identifying the source of the leak of those documents. This Fr. Gleb flatly refused to do.[vii]

A whole series of archival documents discovered and published in Russia show that many bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate have been KGB agents, and that the most talented state security operatives from among the clergy were being advanced to higher positions within the Church. Cited in these publications are extracts from reports to the KGB administration by the "curators of the Church," which testify to the degree of KGB intrusion into Church life. We shall cite here only one item recorded in 1987:

> Taking part for the first time in the Soviet delegation at the general session of UNESCO was agent "ADAMANT", one of the hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church... Five personal and operational files on agents from territorial agencies recommended for promotion to the control link of the Russian Orthodox Church have been examined.
>
> ---Head of Department 4, Colonel Timoshevsky (Central Archive, KGB, page 35b from the report of Department 4, Directorate 5).

Indeed, as Stalin used to say, "the cadres decide everything". It is noteworthy that according to the newly uncovered KGB documents agent "Adamant", i.e., Metropolitan Juvenaly, together with other hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate and leading figures of other Christian confessions in the former USSR, was awarded a KGB citation "for many years of cooperation and active assistance to the organs of state security" (Sheet No. 51. Notes prepared by the KGB of the USSR on the commendation of agent "Adamant." Shugai, V.L Timoshevsky).

Also uncovered was the code name of another prominent KGB agent, "Abbot." This code name belongs to Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk and Yuriev, Chairman of the Publishing Department of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The popular Russian weekly *Ogonyok* uncovered the identity of "agent Antonov" - Metropolitan Philaret (Denisenko) of Kiev. He was highlighted in a series of three articles devoted to this hierarch by Alexander Nezhny, who wrote in his last article, "The Third Name" (*Ogonyok*, No.4, Jan. 1992, pp. 2-3), as follows: "At birth, His Beatitude was named Mikhail; at monastic tonsure he was given the name Philaret; his third name [Antonov] was given to him by the KGB." Let us consider for a moment the significance of this third name. A monk receives a third name only when receiving a tonsure into the great angelic habit, or Schema, but Philaret and his comrades in the Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate received this third name from the KGB while being "tonsured" into the espionage service of a godless Evil Empire. (It should be noted that the "third name" was usually personally selected and formally accepted by a newly recruited agent of the KGB when he set his signature on the document of collaboration.)

The Russian journalist/writer Vladimir Zelinsky develops an interesting theological interpretation to this concept of the "third name":

> Where the bishops are given aliases or code names in addition to their real names, the Church is transformed into an anti-church, a requirement of the originator of this spectacle.
>
> A name, among other things, is part of the liturgy, both the name of God and the name of man. When the names of the Patriarch, of the ruling hierarch, of the ruling arch pastor, of the celebrating priest, and of "all those here present and worshipping" are commemorated at the Great Entrance, at that very moment - in a few words - the entire Church gathers together and stands forth visibly. She stands forth thus before the Father, Who knows every one by name. *By this name* [emphasis supplied], He calls forth, remembers, leads, judges, saves us, and sends a Guardian Angel along our way, whether or not we are believers.
>
> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth saving he who receiveth it (Rev. 2:17).
>
> ...wherever names are being interchanged, intentionally or unintentionally, a parody of the Church is taking place. "Potemkin," "Grigory," "Abbot," "Adamant ..."

> [...] This change of names is mentioned by the Scriptures. We read in the Book of Revelations*: and they have no rest, day or night, who worship of the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name*. (Rev. 14:11) It is amazing that all those "Potemkins" and "Abbots" should never have recalled or heeded these words of St. John ("Spoken in the Dark," *Russkaya Mysl'*, April 24, 1992, pp. 6-7, in Russian).

The Parliamentary Commission established that the former representative of the Patriarchate in the United States, Archbishop Clement (at present bishop of Kaluga) is agent "Topaz". Metropolitan Methodius of Voronezh had until recently hidden behind the code name "Pavel." Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk is "Ostrovsky." The late Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov) was "Svyatoslav," while Patriarch Alexis II is agent "Drozdov". This publicity, however, does not in the least hinder these hierarchs from continuing their usual pursuits: performing church services, hearing confessions, receiving foreign dignitaries, convening Councils and Synods, etc,

In his homily against lying, Abba Dorotheus wrote:

> ...Nothing - not anger, heresy, nor the devil himself - can deceive anyone except in the guise of virtue. The Apostle says that "... *Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness*" (II Cor. 11:14-1.5).

At a Moscow State University student assembly, Metropolitan Cyril of Smolensk and Kaliningrad (agent "Mikhailov"), head of the External Church Relations Department of the Moscow Patriarchate, declared that the fact of encounters by clergy with the KGB was "morally neutral" (Bulletin *Pryarnoy Put'*, Moscow, No. 12, 1992, in Russian).

One can in no way agree with this statement. There is no way in which any interference whatsoever by any governmental agency in the life of Church can be considered normal and innocuous, particularly if such agency is antireligious. There can be no divergence of opinion in this question. The immorality of such a situation is all too obvious.

The Russian religious writer Mikhail Pozdnyaev writes:

> ...For more than half a century the entire Church administration, all important decisions of the Moscow Patriarchate, have been dependent on the whims of Communist authorities and their henchmen; the activity of the Church administration and of State security agencies were so oddly interwoven that often the Church was compelled to

occupy itself with detective matters and with espionage, while security agents delved into deeply ecclesiastical matters (*Russkaya Mysl'*, March 27, 1992).

In a letter (dated March 6, 1992; a copy of this letter was given to the author in March 1992 by Lev Ponomarev, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee) to the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Parliamentary Commission suggested the following:

> The exposure of state security agents within the Church may be a severe, even brutal act towards the Church which has undeniably suffered much. It is the opinion of the Commission that it would be better for the believers themselves to find a means of purging themselves of alien, anticonstitutional elements ...
>
> ...The Commission recommends the introduction, into both canonical and civil statutes, of a prohibition on clergymen clandestinely working with agencies of the state. We also advise evaluation of past activities of [the Church's] administration and its international departments in the light of the constitutional principle of the separation of Church and State. To avoid the danger of any future use of the Church for any anticonstitutional purposes, the Commission has proposed amending existing legislation to prohibit the clergy from engaging in operative-investigatory activities. However, its practical implementation can only be achieved by a prohibition enacted and observed by both sides - by State and the Church.
>
> The Commission expresses the hope that the Russian Orthodox Church will be able to overcome the grievous legacy of the past.

What an excellent idea - to pass a law prohibiting the clergy from engaging in operative and investigatory activities, or, simply put, to forbid informing! However, this concept was introduced by the Church into its canon law more than 1600 years ago, at the Council of Elvira in 313. In its Chapter 74 we read:

> If one of the faithful was an informer, and on the basis of his denunciation someone was subjected to persecution or death, it is just to deny him Holy Communion even on his deathbed. If the situation is not so grievous, he may receive Holy Communion after five years. If he is a catechumen, he could be admitted to baptism after five years (translated from Latin, *Acta Conciliorum, Tomus* I, Paris, 1715).

A year after the Council of Elvira, another ecclesiastical assembly, the Council of Arles, introduced another canon outlawing informing, known as its canon 13:

> Concerning those who allegedly surrendered the Scriptures or the Lord's vessels, or the names of their brothers; it is our will that each of those identified through public proceedings rather than by oral accusation, be removed from the ranks of clergy; but if it be found that they have ordained anyone, and concerning those whom they have ordained the charges have been dropped, then their ordination will remain valid (*ibid.*).

Instead of reviving these canons, the Council of Bishops which was convened at the St. Daniel Monastery in Moscow in April 1992 decided to form a commission to investigate the published reports of links of the Church officials with the KGB. Bishop Alexander of Kostroma and Galich was named head of the commission: it includes seven bishops, all consecrated to the hierarchal rank within the last two years. Their recent ordination was specifically stressed in the statement on the founding of the commission, in order to persuade the public of their complete freedom from any links to the KGB. The commission consists of those elevated to the exalted rank of bishop by the Patriarch and members of his Synod. [viii]Would it not have been better for the Patriarch and Synod, recalling the above-cited canons of the Church forbidding informing, to respond to the questions and accusations directly and with dignity, rather than initiating an investigation of an investigation?

Based on the resolutions of the Moscow Council of Bishops, the above-cited canons were not recalled (the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate prefer to cite and enforce only canons concerning obedience to the bishops!).

An historic opportunity to chastise the sins of informing and false witness, which have become the norm in the life of the Moscow Patriarchate, was missed.

All these facts from the life of the Moscow Patriarchate bring to mind the terrible prophecy of St. Seraphim of Sarov:

> " ... there will come a time when the impiety of Russian bishops will rival the impiety of the Greek hierarchs during the time of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger, and this prophecy will be fulfilled; Forasmuch as this people draw near to Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor Me, but have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men (Is. 29: 13). "[ix]

Self-Justification or Repentance?

We shall be condemned at the Last Judgment, brethren, not because we have not wrought miracles or because we have not theologized, but we shall be condemned because we have not wept for our sins. - St. John of the Ladder

The "precepts of men" mentioned by Prophet Isaiah, substitute, for repentance - self-justification and indulging in human weakness, and teach man to serve what is temporal rather than what is eternal.

A vivid example of this was provided last autumn by Patriarch Alexei II himself. Speaking at Georgetown University, in Washington, D.C., he said:

> "I could have come out with public condemnation of the anti-religious persecutions. Even under Khrushchev, I don't think they would have sent me to prison; I would simply have lived out my days somewhere in a monastery, as one of my fellow bishops had to [How horrible! Imagine a monk ending up in a monastery! - V.P.].
>
> "But at the time I had another consideration on my mind. The Lord, who called me to the episcopacy, has bound me with indissoluble bonds to my flock and made me responsible for it. To this day I shudder at the thought of what would have become of my flock, if by my own resolute actions I had left it without Holy Communion, without the possibility of going to church, if I had left children without baptism, the dying without final consolation. [...]
>
> "I know that I would have committed a great, ineffaceable sin if, concerned with my own moral reputation, I had abandoned the administration of my diocese and betrayed my flock by allowing the militant atheists to behead it ("Patriarch Alexei II at Georgetown University," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Jan. 7, I992, [in Russian))."

Here again is the favorite theory of the Moscow Patriarchate: Compromise has saved the Church. Juggling with the conscience has made it possible for the Church to perform the sacraments. But the Church does not need to be "saved" by us, rather it is we who are in need of salvation which only the Church can provide.

And what about the flock of the disgraced bishop mentioned in the Patriarch's speech, who "ended his days…in a monastery", having "publicly denounced the antireligious persecutions?" Did that flock remain without the Sacraments? If we take the Patriarch's statement to its logical conclusion, one presumes that that bishop had committed a "great, ineffaceable sin" by raising his voice against the persecution of the Church. Is it really possible to suggest that during that time of persecutions this hierarch "betrayed his flock" by concerning himself only with his "moral reputation"? Never! Most emphatically not! The disgraced hierarch acted as Christ, the Chief Shepherd, has commanded all servants of the Church: The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep (In. 10: 11).

The hierarch whom the Patriarch had in mind, but did not name, is none other that the confessor-bishop (Golubev).[x] Archbishop Ermogen is the only hierarch of the Church of Russia who, during the period of the Khrushchev persecutions (late 1950s - early 1960s, when the present Patriarch began his dizzying ascent up the hierarchical ladder) managed things so that not a single church was shut down in his Diocese of Tashkent. Archbishop Ermogen thus refutes the false assertion that appeasement preserves the Church.

We are grateful to Patriarch Alexis II for not letting us forget Vladika Ermogen. Certainly, future generations of Orthodox Russians will remember Archbishop Ermogen with love and gratitude as a man who had sacrificed himself for the good of the Church of Christ and as a living example of a hierarch who, despite living in difficult times, overcame the temptations of Sergianism.

The *Russky Vestnik* ("Russian Herald," No. 13, March 25 -Apr. 1, 1992) article, "A Meeting with the Patriarch", concludes with a discussion of the problem of the hierarchs and clerics of the Moscow Patriarchate taking part in the clandestine operations of the KGB. In the article the Patriarch stated unambiguously:

> "We do not accept unsubstantiated accusations; let them support them with documents. Within the last few years every hierarch has associated with the authorities, particularly with the government's Council on Religious Affairs, where there were more than enough representatives of the KGB. Should it be proved that the ties of one or another priest or bishop have caused harm to the Church or his neighbor, this is a sin for which he must bear the responsibility. But if no such harm has been done, then why all this commotion, what are the real reasons for this campaign to "expose" the clergy?"

I have no desire whatever for the Patriarch to accept unsubstantiated charges. It is indeed essential to produce documents. Let us return to the case of Archbishop Ermogen.

On December 22, 1967, the present Patriarch, then Archbishop Alexis of Tallinn and Estonia, comptroller of the Moscow Patriarchate, dispatched to Archbishop Ermogen the resolution of Patriarch Alexis I (Simansky), which stated that the disgraced bishop had been "retired" to the Zhirovitsky Monastery in 1965, because

> "...at the time there was no appropriate vacant see. A number of sees have become vacant over these two years, but there were also candidates for those sees who were more eligible [i.e., loyal Sergianists, - V.P.] than His Grace Ermogen, under whom problems had arisen in the dioceses which he had consecutively occupied (Tashkent, Omsk, Kaluga), and each time we had to exert ourselves to resolve them and undertake to transfer him to a new see.
>
> "[...] In the Zhirovitsky Monastery the most favorable conditions were created for him [i. e. Archbishop Ermogen, - V.P.] both as regards his day-to-day life, and unimpeded serving and the preaching of the Word of God. However, His Grace has not been satisfied with the conditions created for him, repeatedly expressed his displeasure, with the alleged injustice committed against him and thus disturbed the religious community.
>
> "[...] At the present time the matter is such that the mood of His Grace, as expressed in the tone and character of his statement, does not inspire hope that there will not be a recurrence of what had happened with him in Tashkent, Omsk and Kaluga, and it is up to him to help the Synod terminate his state of retirement and to appoint him to a diocese (*Vestnik RSKhD*, No. 87-88,1968, p. 8, in Russian).

What had taken place in the dioceses occupied by Archbishop Ermogen, and what was the nature of the "problem" which had "invariably arisen"? Archbishop Ermogen addresses them in his detailed response to Patriarch Alexis I, published in the same issue of the *Vestnik RSKhD*:

> "I must particularly emphasize that in all the dioceses where I happened to serve, my activity as a bishop was always conducted within the framework of the law: there was never a single legal charge made against me; I have never been called to account for either criminal or administrative improprieties. True, there were 'complications' with the agents of the state, but in all these instances of 'complications'

the law was on my side, while on the side of the agents were arbitrary requirements not based on Soviet law. "

The greatest 'complications' were in Tashkent. But what were the reasons for those complications?

"The first reason for the 'complications' was my refusal to plenipotentiary Voronichev to co-facilitate the closure of the church in the village of Lunacharskoe, near Tashkent. This church, thanks to the absence of any legal basis for its closure, has remained open to this day. All throughout my administration of the Diocese of Tashkent, not a single temple was shut down within its territory, while in the same period a number of dioceses have suffered waves of mass closures of churches.

"The second reason for 'complications' was the construction of the Cathedral in Tashkent, Thus building was the largest church construction in our Church undertaken over the past 50 years since the restoration of the Patriarchate.

"[...] During my service in Omsk there were in general no complications. It would hardly be possible to take for a 'complication' the fact that I testified as a witness in the case of a warden of one of the closed churches in connection with the sending of a complaint to N.S. Kntshchev protesting the illegal closure of the church!!! To indict a citizen for being summoned to court as a witness is juridically absurd.

"My service in the Kaluga Diocese was under two plenipotentiaries: first under V. A. Smolin, and afterwards under F.P. Riabov [the same Riabov who, as recently as the time of Perestroika, was hindering the opening of the Optina Hermitage in every possible way - V.P]. Basically, complications began to arise in connection with the expansion of the roster of clergy of the diocese and the filling of vacancies with priests (*ibid*., 9-15)."

While Archbishop Ermogen refused to place himself in a position of blind obedience to the commands of the enemies of the Church, and for this was deprived of his see, the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate, obedient to the militant atheists, gave themselves over entirely the authority of the godless, fulfilling their every desire and assignment, including persecution of their brethren in Faith. Frequently, this servility took on absurd forms. Archbishop Ermogen, in his same response to Patriarch Alexis I, relates the advice given him by the late Metropolitan Pitirim of Krutitsa:

> "To avoid all manner of complications, do as follows: When a priest or a member of the parish council comes to see you on any ecclesiastical issue, listen to him, and then send him to the plenipotentiary, with the instruction that having spent time with the latter, he is to return to you. When he returns and reports to you concerning this, call the plenipotentiary and ask him what he said to your visitor. And what the official said to him, you tell him too (*ibid*., p. 10)."

Thus the metropolitan highest in seniority after the Patriarch indicated to a diocesan bishop that in his ecclesiastical administration he must be for his clergy and flock a mouthpiece for the implementation of the directives of an atheist, a foe of the Church.

From the above it becomes clear who it was that "caused harm to the Church and to his neighbor", and who benefitted... Let us recall the words of Patriarch Alexis II:

> "Should it be proved that the actions of one or another priest or bishop have caused harm to the Church or their neighbor, this is sin for which they must bear the responsibility."

Who will be held accountable for the persecution of Archbishop Ermogen?

In his address at Georgetown University, the Patriarch spoke about the self-preservation of the Church as though it were one of the most important principles of Her existence. But is this really Her primary concern? In this regard let us turn to the thoughts of a theologian whom the Patriarch loves to quote in his speeches, the late Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann:

> "The Church does not exist for Herself, and the inner driving force of Her life is not self-preservation. Therefore, the line dividing the genuine and justified preservation of the Church from the temptation of 'self-preservation' is always very thin and all too often undetectable by a vast number of churchmen: when the Church community begins, almost unconsciously, to serve itself rather than the mission of the Church in the world; when believers begin to perceive the Church as existing only for them and for the satisfaction of their 'religions needs', and in these needs their ecclesial skills, in their spiritual satisfaction they see the measure of everything in the life of the Church. To all appearances everything is just as it was, magnificent, prayerful, comforting - but below the surface it is already distorted by a subtle, a most subtle spiritual egotism and egocentrism! Thus, should it not be of primary concern to ecclesiastical conscience to remember this dividing line, lest the true preservation of Church be transformed into an ambiguous,

tempting, and thus spiritually dangerous self-preservation" (*Vestnik RSKhD*, No. 106, 1972, p. 256).

In 1922, the holy Hieromartyr Benjamin (Kazansky), Metropolitan of Petrograd wrote in a letter-testament to his disciples and fellow pastors:

> "Strange are the reasonings of some (perhaps) believing pastors, - that it is necessary to preserve vitality, i.e., to give up everything for their sake. Then what is Christ for? The Church is saved by Christ, not by the partisan of Platon, Benjamin, etc. The point on which they are trying to insist is destruction for the Church. One should neither spare oneself for the sake of the Church, nor sacrifice the Church for the sake of oneself. A time of judgement is at hand. People are sacrificing everything even for the sake of their political beliefs... Should not Christians, all the more so priests, show the same courage, even unto death, if they have any faith in Christ, in the life to come?!" (Archpriest M. Polsky. *Novye Mucheniki Rossiiskie*, Jordanville, N.Y. 1949, vol. 1, pp. 60-61).

None of the biographical sketches of Patriarch Alexis II, published during his stay in the USA in the autumn of 1991, mentioned the important fact that His Holiness had served as comptroller of the Moscow Patriarchate for nearly a quarter of a century. It is no secret that, before perestroika, the person in this position was actually the Number One man in the Church.

It should be noted that in his capacity as the Patriarch's comptroller, Patriarch Alexis II not only transmitted the Synod's decree to the disgraced Archbishop Ermogen, sending him into retirement at a monastery, but also wired a message to the diocesan hierarchs forbidding them to communicate with the banished archpastor. Moreover, it was the present Patriarch who communicated the resolution of the Patriarchate suspending Fathers Nikolai Eshliman and Gleb Yakunin from performing divine services for having dared to raise their voices in defense of the Church by telling their bishops one bitter truth. (Incidentally, according to Fr. Gleb Yakunin, Archbishop Ermogen, for this defense incurred his exile to the monastery.)

"As of today the actions of the Church authorities, who persecuted the courageous Moscow priests Nikolai Eshliman and Gleb Yakunin, have not been condemned by anyone, [writes Fr. George Edelshtein in his article entitled "Reading and Rereading a Classic" (a brochure, Monastery Press, Montreal, 1991)]. These persecutors sit on the Holy Synod, as before. These persecutors maintain that it is they, the nomenclatura figures of the Communist Party, they, the blatant and secret collaborators with the KGB and with the Party elite, who

are the spiritual heirs of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, since it is they who have saved the Church by their firm and unshakable standing in Sergianism. They attempt to persuade us that if all the bishops had stood up against the Communist System, the cannibals would have left not a single bishop alive, and the Church would not exist in Russia today."

The leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate are trampling underfoot the true promise of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who said: *I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it* (Matt 16:18).

The activities of bishops and priests, built upon compromises with the godless, have resulted in moral decay within the Moscow Patriarchate. Compromise with evil cannot result in spiritual peace. Any "peace" arrived at by this means is false. Falsehood has no place in the Church, just as in it there is no place for Satan, the father of lies. There is nothing more terrible than to reconcile oneself to evil and to become accustomed to it.

"Let them not think, however,... that one should value any peace, for I know that there can be a beautiful disagreement and a most detrimental unanimity; but one must love a goodly people which has a goodly objective and is united with God ... It is not good to be either too lax or excessively mettlesome, so as either to agree with everyone through docility, or to disagree with everybody through obstinance ... However, when the matter concerns blatant ungodliness, then it is more appropriate to confront fire and the sword, to ignore the demands of time and rulers and all, rather that partake of the wicked leaven or to touch the infected. The most terrible thing is to fear something more than God, and through this fear to cease to be a servant of Truth and become a traitor to the teachings of Faith and Truth" (St. Gregory the Theologian).

Over the years, the Soviet regime has produced a new type of bishop completely unknown in the history of the Church - a political shyster and administrator, although a bishop is not so much an administrator as a teacher: his basic concern is teaching. A bishop is called to teach by example of his own life. In his letter to Titus, the Apostle Paul, speaking of the appointment of a bishop, writes that a bishop must be *blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, not violent, not given to filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality a lover of good men, sober-minded, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to confute the opposers"* (Titus 1: 7-9).

The consecration of a bishop is preceded by the special ritual of his nomination, his solemn confession of the Faith before the people of the Church, as well as his taking of a special oath, which says, in part:

> "Moreover, I also pledge that I shall do nothing under compulsion, even though compelled by powerful persons [i.e., those in power] or by a multitude of people, if they even will threaten me with death, demanding that I do ought which is contrary to the divine and sacred canons."

Many people believe that Patriarch Alexis II was elected by the free will of the bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate. However, according to the newly uncovered documents, during the days of preparation for the Local Council of 1990, Kryuchkov, the head of the KGB and the future participant in the abortive coup d'etat, dispatched a special encoded telegram to all directorates of the KGB, suggesting that they facilitate the election of Alexis (Ridiger), the Metropolitan of Leningrad, to the Patriarchal throne. Would the KGB operatives within the Church, who were gathered for the Council, have dared to disobey their boss Kryuchkov?

Over the last few years, not a single "Drozdov", "Antonov", "Abbot", "Mikhailov", "Adamant", "Ostrovsky", and others as yet undisclosed, - not one of these "agents in cassocks" has provided an example of repentance ... NOT A SINGLE ONE!

The bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate not only fail to manifest an example of repentance, they are proceeding even further along the path of self-justification. At the Council of Bishops (at the St. Daniel Monastery in late March - early April 1992), the present head of the Moscow Patriarchate went so far as to characterize as "libel" the irrefutable evidence of cooperation between the hierarchs and the KGB. Thus, on the first day of the Council, setting the tone for the further course of the Council's discussion, the Patriarch stated that the many problems of Church life "have to a large degree been artificially created from the outside, with the goal of further alienating the people of God from the Church. [...] Some media [...] are taking part in an unseemly campaign of slander against the Church by denigrating Her servants."

Thus, according to the Patriarch, the problems of Church life "... are artificially created from without! Who are they created by? What unknown forces are "alienating the people of God from the Church"? These problems have been engendered by Sergianism and the refusal to repent of it. It is precisely this which is alienating the children of God from the Church.

A commission has been established to investigate the links between the hierarchs and clergy, and the KGB. It consists of eight young bishops ordained during the period of perestroika. The leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate is using this fact as a cover, emphasizing their supposed freedom from the influence of the KGB, but is also proceeding along its own infamous course by "exposing" these same young hierarchs. The young bishops are confronted with a natural alternative: either find the means to vindicate the "actions" of the agent-hierarchs, confirming Alexis II's statement on the alleged campaign of slander initiated by the press against the Church and establishing that the press is guilty of lying; or, admitting the importance and vital necessity of giving answers to directly asked questions, to deprive themselves of the patronage of those against whom those terrible charges had been leveled, i.e., in the Patriarch's words, to face the possibility of "ending their days somewhere in a monastery", far from their diocesan sees.

With the help of the commission created at the Council, the hierarchs, collaborating with the KGB, try to affect a delay and, like an ostrich, bury their heads in the sand. But our conscience is not before men, but before God Himself. In the words of St. Ephraim the Syrian: "If we are ashamed before men, then how much more ought we to be ashamed before, and at the same time, fear God, Who knows all the secrets of men. It is He Who will judge the whole world and render unto each according to his deeds."

"Now is not the time to criticize the Patriarch and the Moscow Patriarchate and to gloat over their situation." I agree. God forbid that we should gloat! But in what way should we assist them? To pretend that everything is fine, that we will take no further notice of this Judas-like sin of treason, their informing and bearing of false witness, that we will no longer urge them to take the splendid road of repentance? We read in the Scriptures: "*He who covereth his own ungodliness shall not prosper: but he who blameth himself shall be loved.* (Prov. 28: 13)

The pages of today's national periodicals from the column "Let us look into the Church Calendar" in *Kommersant* to lengthy articles in *Izvestia*, *Nedelya* and *Moskovskie Novosti*, abound in various data on religious subjects.

In the last few months, the name of Deacon Andrei Kuraev has become very prominent. He has published articles in which he honestly and frankly admits that not only he, who received his theological education at the Moscow Seminary and the Theological Academy in Romania, and at the writing of this article was employed as an aide to the Patriarch, but also a good half of the priests of the Moscow Patriarchate in one way or the another

collaborated with the KGB justified by Kuraev" (see *Russkaya mysl'* Feb. 28, 1992, in Russian). Deacon Kuraev admits: "Yes, it was a sin. Yes, it did happen ... But then it was every other man! Also the KGB is exaggerating. They also have their own lists. And in general, it is all their provocation: they are sinking and dragging us, the Orthodox, down with them, defaming and discrediting us" ("*Posmetrnyi triunu' komiteta*", *Moscovskie Novosti*, March 8, 1992, [in Russian]. And not once in any of his writings does Deacon Andrei Kuraev mention the need to repent!

If it is indeed, as you write, Fr. Deacon, "our common national and social sin, which in the person of the Church's pastors has only been focused more clearly, fully and grievously," shouldn't the pastors show an example of repentance to those who do not know what it is?

It would be interesting to ask Deacon Andrei Kuraev: How is it that you, who consider yourself an Orthodox Christian, which obligates you to live in the spirit of Truth and in the power of righteousness, took the path of clandestine collaboration with the security services, as you admit in the pages of your articles? What compels you to resort not only to self-justification, but to exonerating and defending your mentors 'the bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate, who carry the burden of 30 or 40 years of work in the KGB? Your public semi-confession testifies to the "ultimate triumph of the Committee" (the KGB - V.P.), an example of a brilliant solution of one of the objectives of the godless: to weaken the Church by perverting the confession of the Faith. How many more aides do they have like you?

In his article "Generation of Vipers" (August, 1967), Boris Talantov, a contemporary Confessor,[xi] denounced the pseudo-pastors and called upon the Russian people:

> "The Patriarchate's leaders are betraying the Church, refusing to follow the brilliant confession of Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitans Peter of Krutitsa, Cyril of Kazan, Joseph of Petrograd, and a host of other confessors, who refused to allow the Church administration to be used to advance the internal and external policies of the godless regime.
>
> "The Patriarchate's leaders are betraying the Church, refusing to defend the rights of the Orthodox majority of the Russian people to give their children and the youth a Christian education ...
>
> "...IN PRESERVING UNITY, THEY [the children of the Church - V.P.] MUST BEGIN A NATION-WIDE DENUNCIATION OF THE CORRUPT PSEUDO-PASTORS AND A CLEANSING OF THEM FROM THE CHURCH."

If the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate do not have the strength to set an example of repentance for their flock, LET THEM STEP ASIDE, as was suggested by the Bishops at Solovki to Metropolitan Sergius, and surrender their sees to archpastors who are able to take this narrow path.

Fr. George Edelstein correctly writes:

> "The Sergianists lie, not at all because they may be exiled to hard labor and not because a pistol is being held to the back of their heads, but only because they are Sergianists: lying is their doctrine; they believe and profess that the Church must be saved by lying. This is their first and greatest commandment (*Chitaya i perechityvaya classiku*, a pamphlet published by Monastery Press, Montreal, 1992).

True repentance is the only way to bring an end to this falsehood. But in any case, these hierarchs will not escape the spiritual judgement which can and must take place under the conditions of the conciliar pleroma of the Russian Orthodox Church, because there is no point in talking about ecclesiastical judgement within the Moscow Patriarchate: impartial ecclesiastical judgement is absent from its very structure. The Synod holds full authority over the Church's life in its own hands, just as is done by the Italian Mafia or the Politburo. Since, according to the Statutes of the Moscow Patriarchate, the decisions of any ecclesiastical court (reviewing complaints, non-canonical activities of bishops and clergy, etc.) are referred to the Synod itself, it would be naive to expect its members to condemn themselves, and not keep secret all their evildoings.

Bishop Alexander of Kostroma and Galich, head of the Church Commission investigating the KGB documents, has expressed his apprehension that disclosing all the sins committed by stubborn self-justification amid obvious sins would be even more confusing to "these little ones," and so others would be completely alienated from the Church!

Everybody knows the expression: "to tell tales out of school". The Russians say ""To carry litter out of the house." But if you keep that litter in the house all the time, it will inevitably become filled with an unbearable stench, and it will become impossible to live in such a house. There will come a time when it will become vitally important to remove the accumulated garbage from the Russian house, to air and to clean it thoroughly. The Church teaches us continually, through repentance, to clean the litter from our houses - our human souls.

Trusting in earthly "saviors", keeping silent for the sake of a bogus peace, and the resulting trampling of the Law of God, prepares the world for the coming of Antichrist.

The mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now restraineth will continue to restrain until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming, even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they should believe the lie, that they all might be judged who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (II Thess. 2: 7-12).

If the Russian people do not repent for not believing truth and not confessing the Truth as did the New Martyrs, then, just as they accepted in silence the pseudo-leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate, so will they also accept Antichrist. For with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10: 10), while BY SILENCE IS GOD BETRAYED (St. Gregory the Theologian).

The Moscow Patriarchate & Ecumenism

Instead of love, I call it misanthropy and apostasy from divine love, when one promotes a heretical error to the greater destruction of those who hold to that error.

- St. Maximus the Confessor

Within the context of our discussion we cannot fail to touch upon ecumenism, another extremely important subject which is a stumbling block on the path to unifying the Russian Orthodox Church.

In socio-cultural, national and international fellowship of love and charity toward those who remain outside the Church, infinite horizons of fraternal and useful cooperation are disclosed to us. How timely and useful it would be for the Christians to present a united front, to lift up their voice for the rebirth of the best of the desecrated culture of all mankind, to stand up against all manner of ungodliness, in defense of the right, honor, and dignity of the spiritual-rational personality of men, which is being trampled in a world which lies in evil.

One has to welcome rejection of age-old separation of Christians, but only if this is done with the objective of disclosing the treasures of Orthodoxy, to bring those who have fallen away from the Church back to unity in Orthodoxy.

It is with just this purpose that, as far back as before the Revolution of 1917, the Russian Orthodox Church conducted an active dialogue with both the Anglicans and the Old Catholics. In the diaspora, the hierarchs and the theologians of the Russian Church Abroad continued these discussions and even participated as observers at some ecumenical forums. The attitude of the Church Abroad toward ecumenism has always been of a sober, strictly Orthodox character, in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Fathers. The outlook of this Church was particularly well-defined in a statement issued on December 31, 1931, when the Russian Church Abroad appointed a representative to the Committee for the Continuation of the World Conference on Faith and Order:

> "Preserving the Faith in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Synod of Bishops confesses that the Church has never been divided. The issue lies only in who does and who does not belong to Her. Moreover, the Synod of Bishops fervently greets all attempts

by the heterodox to study the teaching of Christ about the Church, in the hope that through such an investigation, especially with the participation of representatives of the Holy Orthodox Church, they will eventually arrive at the conviction that the Orthodox Church, which is the pillar and the ground of truth (I Tim. 3: 15), fully and without any adulteration has retained the doctrine taught by Christ the Savior to His disciples. With this Faith and such hope, the Synod of Bishops gratefully accepts the invitation of the Committee for the Continuation of the World Conference on Faith and Order" (quoted in "A Sorrowful Epistle" by Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) June 14/27, 1969. *Pravoslavnaya Rus'*, No. 15,1.969 [Jordanville, N.Y.], in Russian).

Such was the invariable, long-held position of the Russian Church Abroad in relation to the Ecumenical Movement. But since 1962, i.e., from the moment when that organization was joined by the Moscow Patriarchate, the statements issued by the World Council of Churches took on such a radically leftist theological tone and were filled with such pro-Communist content, that the continued attendance at those inter-confessional forums became impossible for the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

The Ecumenical Movement, in which the Moscow Patriarchate plays so prominent a role, takes as its guiding principle the Protestant view of the Church. The Protestants hold that there is no single truth and no single Church, but that each of the many Christian denominations possesses a particle of the truth, and that these relative truths can, by means of dialogue, lead to the One Truth and the One Church. One of the ways of attaining this unity, as perceived by the ideologues of the Ecumenical Movement, is the holding of joint prayers and religious services, so that in time communion from a common chalice (intercommunion) will be achieved.

Orthodoxy can never accept such an ecclesiology, for it believes and bears witness that there is no need to assemble particles of the truth, since the Orthodox Church is the repository of the fullness of the Truth, which was given to Her on the day of the Holy Pentecost.

Still, the Orthodox Church does not forbid its members to pray for those who are outside Her Communion. Through the prayers by the holy and righteous John of Kronstadt and the blessed Archbishop John (Maximovich), Protestants and Catholics, as well as Jews and Moslems, indeed even Pagans, have received healing. Yet, acting on this faith and their pleas, these and others of our righteous have at the same time taught them that the Truth of salvation is to be found only in Orthodoxy.

A remarkable example of the correct Orthodox approach to the heterodox world is provided to us by Protopresbyter Florus Zholtkevich:

> "The Father in the Gospel parable, perhaps more than once went out to the road to see whether his son was returning, yet he himself did not leave his home, but awaited his return. Thus also does the One Universal Church patiently await the return of all to its bosom. And we, her faithful children, pray continually. Let the whole heterodox world come to an understanding of the universal, eternal, infallible and immutable Truth of Christ, and with us let them glorify the all-pure and majestic name of God Who is worshipped in Trinity" (*Pravoslavnaya Rus; "Pravoslavie i Ekumenizm,"* Jordanville, N.Y. No.1, p. 4, [in Russian]).

For the Orthodox, joint prayer and Communion at the liturgy is an expression of an already existing unity within the bounds of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. St. Irenaeus of Lyons (2nd century) concisely expressed this: "Our Faith is in accord with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist confirms our Faith." The Holy Fathers of the Church teach that the members of the Church comprise the Church - the Body of Christ - because in the Eucharist they partake of the Body and the Blood of Christ. Outside the Eucharist and Communion there is no Church. Communing together would be an admission that all those receiving Communion belong to the One Apostolic Church, whereas the realities of Christian history even of our time unfortunately point out the deep dogmatic and ecclesiastical division of the Christian world.

How many times have we heard and read in the official statements of the World Council of Churches (WCC) of the necessity for showing Christian compassion to the needy of the world. This is undoubtedly a wonderful idea, very much in the spirit of the Gospel, against which one may hardly speak. It is good to express sympathy for the blacks of South Africa or for those suffering amid the upheavals in the Middle East, Indochina, and other places. But did these comprise all of the human sufferings in those years? The WCC was very well informed about the situation of believers in the USSR but it never uttered a single word about the millions of martyred Christians, it never came to the defense of those who were subjected to persecution by the Communist regimes of Khrushchev and Brezhnev.

Here is a typical example: In 1975, the Fifth Assembly of the WCC met in Nairobi. The Council's leadership was quite disconcerted by publication in the Assembly's newspaper of a letter by priest Gleb Yakunin and Lev Regelson, entitled "An Appeal on Behalf of the Persecuted Christians". The authors of

the letter complained that the Council was not raising its voice in defense of the decimated Russian Orthodox Church and of the completely eradicated Churches in Albania. Mentioned in the letter was the shameful fact that the wee had said nothing even when a priest was shot in Albania for having baptized a newly born baby. Yakunin and Regelson tried to persuade the delegates of the WCC not to harbor any illusions with regard to the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate in the WCC, who were fulfilling the objectives of the Soviet government and pursuing the strategic goals of the Communist Party of the USSR.

The few timid attempts by a number of delegates at this Assembly to issue an official statement on the problem of the persecution of believers met with no success because of opposition by Philip Potter, the General Secretary of the World Council Churches, and the Moscow delegation headed by Metropolitan Juvenaly (alias agent "Adamant").[xii]

In connection with this let us note the activities of the last two Assemblies of the WCC. We have taken this information not from an Orthodox source, but from the Lutheran weekly Christian News (April 1-8, 1991). Published in the journal is an account by the Lutheran theologian John Millheim of this ecumenical encounter, which exposes the spiritual bankruptcy of the WCC:

> 'When the guests and delegates to the 7th Assembly of the WCC gathered under a large tent for prayer on the evening of the opening, they were welcomed by male aborigines performing the dance "corroboree" (a festive dance performed during celebrations of tribal victories and similar events). They danced around a fire from which rose a large cloud of smoke, through which the worshippers [i.e. the Christians] passed. They [the assembled worshippers] were told that in this way, by passing through this cleansing cloud of smoke, the spirituality of the aborigines merged with Christian spirituality."

Further in his account, John Millheim recalls the similarly pagan opening of the ecumenical meeting at the Sixth ... Assembly of the WCC in Vancouver, Canada, in 1983:[xiii]

> "...The North American Indians of that locality [the province of British Columbia - V.P.] had carved a totem pole for the WCC, which Philip Potter the WCC General Secretary and others erected, as a symbol of celebration of unity in the divine services. When that totem pole was delivered to the assembly of the WCC, the assembled delegates were

told that the Indians had come with their spirit of god to welcome and take part in the assembly. Moreover, the very opening of the Vancouver Assembly was accompanied by Indian dances and prayers."

The strange smoke, the totem pole, the invocations of the spirits of the dead, are an inseparable part of the religious pluralism and paganism that is to be expected at each Assembly of the WCC.

This infusion of non-Christian religious practices into Christianity is a typical trend and predilection of the WCC in accordance with its agenda for the 1990's.

Another article, published in the same issue of Christian News, adds important details to the above-cited account of the WCC meeting in Canberra. In it one finds an account of the address delivered by Chiung Hiun-Kiung, a woman pastor of the Presbyterian Church in South Korea:

> "Her speech began with a ceremonial dance with two male aborigines and several Koreans. She invited those present to 'step with me [with her] on the holy ground, first taking off your shoes, while we dance to prepare the way for the Spirit.' Many obeyed.
>
> "Then, with candles burning on either side, she began to invoke the spirits. She read the names of the spirits of the dead from a printed sheet which she subsequently burned, scattering the ashes into the air. Among the dead spirits she invoked were Hagar, Uriah, the infants murdered by Herod, Joan of Are, the Jews killed in gas chambers, Mahatma Ghandi, Steve Biko, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and finally 'the Spirit of the Liberator, our Brother Jesus, tormented and slain on the cross.'"
>
> Further on, the article in Christian News relates how Chiung Hiun-Kiung glorified Korean animism, goddesses, especially Bodhisatva, who gives strength "to swim to the shores of Nirvana", and the goddess Kuan Yin, whom she identified with the Holy Spirit. According to Chiung Hiun Kiung, Bodhisatva is awaiting for the world to be enlightened, and then people, trees, birds, mountains, air and water will be able to immerse themselves together in Nirvana, where they will be able to live collectively in eternal wisdom and compassion. To this Chiung Hiun Kiung added: "Could this be the female form of Christ, Who was the first-born among us, and Who is forging ahead and leading others behind Him?"

In conclusion, the author of the article wrote that Chiung Hiun-Kiung concluded her performance at the Assembly of the WCC with one more dance with an aborigine. However "for the sake of decency" the author chose not to describe this dance.

Proponents of the contemporary ecumenical movement not only fail to advance unity, but deepen the division of the Christian world. Rather than follow a narrow path of salvation in confessing the One Truth, they call upon us to take the wide path of unity with those who confess all manner of errors about which the holy Apostle Peter said that "*And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of*" (ii Pet. 2: 1-2).

In the past the WCC called for unity among Christians. Now this organization seeks unity with pagans. The World Council of Churches has embraced religious syncretism. This position is leading to an obliteration of the differences between religious denominations, with the purpose of creating one universal world religion which would be made up of something from each religion. The universal world religion also implies a universal world government with one economic order, and one world nation - a fusion of all existing nations, with a single leader. If this is really brought about, it would indeed provide a seed-bed for the reign of Antichrist.

Let us also mention the lamentable and infamous ecumenical prayer assembly which was organized several years ago by the Pope of Rome at Assisi, and in which non-Christians took part. To what deity did the assembled religious personages, among whom were representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate, pray? At the assembly the Pope of Rome told the non-Christians that "they believe in the true God."

The true God is the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is worshipped within the triune Trinity. Do non-Christians believe in the Holy Trinity? Can Christians pray to an unspecified deity? Such prayer is heresy, pure and simple.

Ecumenism, according to the eminent Orthodox Theologian, Archimandrite Justin (Popovich), is the "Pan-Heresy".[xiv]

At the insistence of the godless regime, the Moscow Patriarchate joined the WCC in 1962, in order to carry out the Soviets' external policies and disinformation within the framework of this organization. Who is forcing it to participate in this organization at the present time? Why does it not abandon this semi-pagan organization in light of its complete degeneration? For decades the Moscow Patriarchate has shown zeal for the world ecumenical movement, thereby violating a whole series of Church canons.

Several representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate maintain that by their formal membership in the World Council of Churches they testify to the Truth which abides in the Orthodox Church. But the blatant violation of the canons testifies more to a violation of the Sacred Tradition of the Church than to a confession of Truth.

The 15th canon of the First-Second Council of Constantinople (861) reads:

> " ... Those persons who, on the other hand, because of some heresy condemned by holy Councils, or Fathers, withdraw themselves from communion with their president who, that is to say, is preaching the heresy publicly and teaching it bareheaded in the church, such persons not only are not subject to any canonical penalty on account of their having walled themselves off from any and all communion with the one called a bishop before any conciliar or synodal verdict has been rendered, but, on the contrary, they shall be deemed worthy to enjoy the honor which befits them among Orthodox Christians. For they have defied, not bishops, but pseudo-bishops and pseudo-teachers; and they have not sundered the unity of the Church with any schism, but, on the contrary, have been sedulous to rescue the Church from schisms and divisions"[xv]

Neo-Renovationism and Ecumenism are inseparable components of Sergianism and are openly preached by the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate. The *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* is replete with reports and photographs of Protestant pastors preaching in the Orthodox churches of Russia with the approval of and even in the presence of the bishops. And now many of these Western preachers look upon Russia as a broad field for the dissemination of their teachings. And why shouldn't they? All these years they were led to believe that the Moscow Patriarchate was a champion of the ecumenical movement.

What would be the reaction of the pillars of Orthodoxy, the holy Fathers of the Church Saints Athanasius the Great, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Mark of Ephesus, and others - to the participation of Orthodox Christians in the modern ecumenical movement?

Let us end this discussion of ecumenism and turn to antiquity, and cite testimony from the life of St. Maximus the Confessor, who shows how Orthodox Christians must comport themselves when confronted with apostasy--the massive abandoning of the Truth of Christ.

"Will you not then enter into communion with the see of Constantinople?" St. Maximus the Confessor was asked by the Patricians Troilus and Sergius Euphrates, the chief of the royal table.

"No," replied the Saint. "'Why so?," they asked,

"Because," replied the Saint, "the leaders of this Church have rejected the resolutions of the four holy Councils ... and have excommunicated themselves from the Church many times over and accused each of erroneous thinking ... "

"Then you alone will be saved, and all others will perish," they objected.

To this the Saint replied: "When all the people in Babylon were worshipping the golden idol, the three holy children did not condemn anyone to perdition. They did not concern themselves with the doings of others, but took care only for themselves, lest they should fall away from true piety. In precisely the same way, when Daniel was cast into the lion's den, he did not condemn any of those who, fulfilling the law of Darius, did not wish to pray to God, but he kept in mind his own duty, and desired to die rather than to sin against his conscience by transgressing the Law of God. God forbid that I should condemn anyone or say that I alone am being saved! However, I shall sooner agree to die than to apostatize in any way from the true Faith and thereby suffer torments of conscience."

"But what will you do," inquired the envoys, "when the Romans are united to the Byzantines? Yesterday, indeed, two legates arrived from Rome, and tomorrow, the Lord's day, they will have communicated the Mysteries with the Patriarch."

The Saint replied: "Even if the whole universe holds communion with the Patriarch, I will not communicate with him. For I know from the writings of the holy Apostle Paul: the Holy Spirit declares that even the angels would be anathema if they should begin to preach another Gospel, introducing some new teachings."[xvi]

Holy father Maximus, pray unto God for us!

The Free Orthodox Church in Russia

The Future of Orthodoxy is determined not by compromises with Antichrist but by heroic standing and confession. - Professor Ivan Illin

The fruits of Sergianism confuse many Orthodox believers in Russia. Therefore it is no wonder that some parishes in Russia have joined the Free Orthodox Church, under the First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, one of the few Orthodox Churches which does not participate in the ecumenical movement. These communities (currently over 60) form the Free Russian Orthodox Church.

The Moscow Patriarchate is gravely concerned over the existence of the Russian Church Abroad. Serge Schmemann, Moscow correspondent of The New York Times, on the eve of the visit of Patriarch Alexis I to the United States, correctly noted: "The small Church Abroad is ... a constant reminder of the past about which the Moscow Patriarchate and the Patriarch himself would rather forget" (The New York Times. Nov. 9, 1991). The Church Abroad will not allow anyone to forget about Sergianism, about the New Martyrs, about the depravity of the ecumenical movement (whose ardent proponent the Patriarch is), all of which taken together has led to apostasy.

A considerable number of believers from the Catacomb Church has joined the Free Russian Orthodox Church. These are Russian Orthodox believers who share the position of the Solovki bishop-confessors and have condemned the Declaration of 1927 by Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodksy). This Church was particularly strong in the 1930s-40s. Its followers were ostracized by the Sergianists, while the Soviet authorities exiled and even executed many confessors of the Catacomb Church merely because they refused to accept the Sergian Declaration. Even to this day, this part of the Church is unable to avail itself of the constitutional right to a normal and legal existence.

We must not idealize each clergyman's coming over to the bosom of the Church Abroad. Unfortunately, such a transfer of allegiance is not in every case the result of a search for the Truth. For some it represents the possibility of obtaining what they could not obtain in the Patriarchate - a higher position, a trip abroad, etc. Others are simply "searching for themselves." And of course one shouldn't exclude here infiltration by security agents in an attempt to discredit the Church in the eyes of Orthodox believers.

Many doubt the legality of the decision taken in May of 1990 by the Council of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad to accept clergy and parishes leaving the Moscow Patriarchate. Of course, the establishment of a parallel hierarchy and ecclesiastical jurisdiction is an objectively abnormal phenomenon. This phenomenon, however, is the result of a severe disease in the life of the Russian Orthodoxy of the 20th century, which has been caused by SERGIANISM. I believe that as soon as the problems which have accumulated in the Church because of Sergianism are overcome, the reasons for our separation will also fall away.

The Russian Church Abroad has never considered herself outside the fold of the Russian Orthodox Church, has never striven to become autocephalous. In 1945, an appeal by Patriarch Alexis I for the Church Abroad to unite with the Moscow Patriarchate was answered by the First Hierarch of the Church Abroad, Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky). He replied that the members of the Church Abroad " ... have never regarded, and do not regard, themselves as outside the fold of the Russian Orthodox Church, for they have never severed the canonical, prayerful and spiritual unity with their Mother Church... Only a Pan-Russian Church Council freely and lawfully convoked and totally independent in its decisions, with the participation, as far as possible, of all bishops abroad, and particularly of those now jailed in Russia, might serve as a body completely qualified to judge between the bishops abroad and the current head of the Russian Church. Before such a council we are prepared to render an account for all our deeds during the time of our sojourn abroad ... (M. Rodzianko, "*Pravda O Zarubezhnoi Tserkvi", Pravoslavnaya zhizn*, JordanvilIe, N.Y., 1976], p. 40, in Russian).

One must not identify the Moscow Patriarchate with the whole Church of Russia. There are many selfless pastors in the Patriarchate, who have devoted themselves to the service of Christ, and who in this time, which is most difficult in all respects, make up the Church. Many of the Moscow Patriarchate's defenders enjoy pointing to these worthy pastors and laymen as proof of its vitality. However, these honorable men show their worth not thanks to the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate, but despite it.

I came to this conclusion during my several trips to Russia. In Valaam, in Ryazan', in Pechory, at the Pyukhtitski and Shamordino convents, in Kostroma, and in many other places, I met with and had lengthy conversations with non-partisan Church people who had no plans for leaving the Patriarchate, but who were doing their best to overcome the crisis in the Church caused by Sergianism. Many of them complained that instead of implementing reforms and personnel replacements (particularly at the top), which might have alleviated

the strain within the Church and made it more viable, the Patriarch has chosen the path of further intensifying authoritative principles and solidifying the higher Church bureaucracy which was formed in pre-Perestroika years.

To counter the move of clergy to the Russian Church Abroad, which might assume massive dimensions, the leadership of the Patriarchate has decided to annihilate the Free Church by any means possible, and has called to its assistance the authorities [of the state] (which is, incidentally, a favorite Sergianist method)... The struggle is frequently expressed in physical violence directed against the communities, clergy and faithful of the Free Russian Orthodox Church.

The opposition between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Free Russian Orthodox Church is far from a private inter-Church conflict [the Kursk Province's independent newspaper *Aksenty* notes]; it is the inevitable result of a regenerated Russian self-awareness which had been methodically eradicated by the Bolsheviks.

When a crowd of "righteous" beats up a "sinner", one thing is clear: something is wrong. Both the new governing authorities and the old hierarchs of "Soviet Orthodoxy" are trying to beat up the Free Russian Orthodox Church today, and they are doing this with rare unanimity. It is simply astonishing how quickly they merge, the former persecuted and the persecutors! Why are they and others so afraid of their own Orthodox people? Why do they hate them so?

In our time it is not easy to choose the right way. But all the more respect is due to those who have found it far away from the road.

Truth and Prayer on the Paths to Reunification

Lying is the destruction of love. - St. John of the Ladder

All of this is difficult to bear. Yet we have to know the truth about the life of the Church in Russia, and particularly now, when from all quarters it is being suggested that the hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad sit down at the negotiation table with the bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate. Keeping in mind the pre-conciliar process called for by the hierarchs of the Russian Church Abroad, we are obliged to intensify our spiritual battle against evil, to drive it from our life before seriously initiating negotiations on the reunification of the two parts of the Russian Orthodox Church, which we so desire.

The weaponry used in this assault against the evil of falsehood must be the truth, for *The Lord ... hath loved righteousness* (Ps. 10: 7). This is what a priest calls to mind when he puts on his sacred vestments and utters the words of sacred Scripture: *Thy priests shall be clothed with righteousness ,and Thy righteous shall rejoice* [Ps. 131: 9], *always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.*

Each day the believers of the Moscow Patriarchate, as well as those of the Church Abroad, pronounce the words of the remarkable morning prayer of commemoration. We all understand the meaning of these words, but do they penetrate into the depths of our consciousness?

"Among the first, O Lord, remember Thy holy, catholic and apostolic Church, which Thou hast acquired with Thy precious Blood: and establish, strengthen, expand and increase it, grant it peace, and preserve it forever unvanquished by the gates of hades. Quell Thou the divisions among the Churches; put down the arrogance of the heathen; and speedily destroy and uproot the uprising of heresy, and set it at nought through the power of Thy Holy Spirit."

Let us ponder these words; let us utter them not only with our lips, but, more importantly, with our hearts, so that with all the Truth of God they may enter into our life and *bring forth fruits worthy of repentance* (Lk. 3: 8), which our long-suffering and merciful Lord expects of us.

St. Ephraim the Syrian says: "Do not enclose your prayer in words alone; let your every action be a divine service to God..." The Church teaches that prayer is action transformed into contemplation and that action is a prayer which has become a deed. Let prayer lead us to repentance.

In order to be renewed through repentance, it is not enough merely to name a sin, giving it the form of something impersonal, "socio-national and popular", thereby transforming it from something negative and dangerous into something habitual, with which all have long since lived and become reconciled. According to the definition of St. Isaac the Syrian, what is required is not a pronouncement, but a sincere understanding and acknowledgment of one's guilt, heartfelt contrition for what has been done, and a complete renewal of one's personality and way of life. What was peculiar to man before repentance becomes alien and improper afterwards; *metanoia* — a change of mind - also entails a change in feeling and actions. All of this then results in a new personality, a new spiritual creature.

Understandably, this is not an easy matter. This kind of repentance is for many identical to confession. Yet it is something we cannot do without:

> *Whosoever, therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father, Who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father, Who is in heaven* (Mt. 10: 32-33).

> "One of the distinguishing features of a great people is its ability to get to its feet after a fall. No matter how grievous its humiliation, the hour wiil strike, and it will muster its dissipated moral forces and embody them in one great man or several great men, who will lead it to their historic way from which they had strayed for a time" (*Troitski Paterik*, [Trinity-Sergius Lavra, 1896], p. 8-9J.

Uttering these words in 1892 at the Moscow Theological Academy, the historian Vladimir Kliuchevsky of course had in mind St. Sergius of Radonezh, who played an enormous role in delivering Russia from the Tartar Yoke. Kliuchevsky's words are also applicable to other critical periods in the history of Russia, including the present one.

In the 20th century, the best part of the Russian people has mustered its "dissipated moral forces" and embodied them in the New Martyrs and Confessors. Unexpectedly revealed to us during the years of the most brutal persecutions of the Church and shining in the throng of Martyrs and Confessors, these warriors of the Spirit call us to the utmost seriousness, to prayer. To the New Martyrs we must turn for help, for guidance as to how we, the children of the Russian Church, may find correction. The most precious spiritual fruits are bestowed when we seek guidance from those whom we consider more righteous and higher than us. This is not surprising, for *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble* (Jas. 4: 6), while the appeal for guidance and for assistance is definitely the fruit of a certain Christian humility.

What then do the Martyrs of our times, the victims of godless Communism, tell us? They tell us all that it is essential for our spirit to be reborn. Spiritual regeneration is the way for each Christian. And the way to such regeneration lies through repentance. We all have something of which to repent. We are all members of the one family of mankind. We all bear responsibility for the horrible madness of the godlessness which for more than seven decades reigned over our unfortunate homeland. Yes, we have something of which to repent. Repentance is not despair; it is freedom and perfect joy. Without repentance, without the life of the Spirit all earthly joy is transformed into grief.

At one time, the people of Nineveh heeded the call to repentance delivered by the Prophet Jonah. *And the men of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them ... And the king of Nineveh said: "Who knoweth if God will repent, and turn from His fierce anger, and so shall not perish?" And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways; and God repented of the evil which He said He would do to them; and He did it not.* (Jon. 3: 5, 9-10)

Fr. Victor Potapov

Great Lent

Sunday of the Myrrh-bearers, 1992

Washington, DC

Notes

[i] In order to avoid any possible misunderstandings it is necessary to make the following clarification: one must avoid confusing the somewhat outwardly similar terms - the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church. The Moscow Patriarchate is the guiding institution represented by the Patriarch, his Synod, and various departments and commissions, *i.e.*, the ecclesiastical administration. The Moscow Patriarchate is not synonymous with the Russian Orthodox Church. The meaning of the Church lies beyond the framework of one local church and embraces all true believers and those who live in Christ.

In the present treatise the term "Moscow Patriarchate" is understood first of all to mean the ecclesiastical administration of the Church in Russia.

The author of this essay wishes to thank Vazgen Khachaturian for translation of this manuscript, Isaac Lambertsen, who edited the work, and the Rev. Leonid Mickle and Daniel Olsen for their invaluable advice and proofreading.

[ii] Even after the demise of the "Living Church", the poison of Renovationist false teachings remains within the Moscow Patriarchate. Let us recall the anti-Orthodox theological opinions of Metropolitan Nikodim Rotov (who formed an entire school of followers and showed himself to be the forerunner of the notorious "Liberation Theology," until recently so prevalent in Catholic circles in Latin America). In connection with this, recall the words of rapture and gratitude addressed by the late Patriarch Pimen and other senior hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate to Gorbachev for re-establishing "Leninist principles" *vis-a-vis* the Church. Recall the following assertion made in 1989 by one of the bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate at the meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches convened in Moscow: "We in the Soviet Union want to build a just and viable society within the context of socialist ideals." In an interview given to Pravda, on July 17, 1990 (the anniversary of the murder of the Imperial Family, which the Moscow Patriarchate now plans to canonize!), Patriarch Alexis II, extemporizing on the closeness between Communism and Christianity(!), in an address to the Party admitted to feeling some concern about the disintegration of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and stated that he is praying that it would avert the "imminent explosion". One need only leaf through back issues of the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate to be convinced that the false ideas of the Renovationists of old are alive and well in the consciousness of the followers of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky).

[iii] "The Epistle to Pastors and the Flock", or the *Declaration* of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod, dated 16/29 July 1927, was first published in *Izvestia*, and was later reprinted in a number of works on the history of the Russian Church of the 20th century. The editorial preface to the Declaration, published in *Izvestia*, states: "The farsighted part of the clergy [i.e., the Renovationists - V.P.] took this path in 1922." The author of this article cites the text of the Declaration as printed in *Patriarch Sergius and His Spiritual Legacy* [in Russian], (Moscow: Moscow Patriarchate, Moscow, 1947, pp. 59-63).

[iv] In his book *A Short Survey of the History of the Russian Church From the Revolution to Our Days* (published in Russian by Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N.Y., 1952), Prof. Andreyev names but a few of the extraordinary leaders and faithful of the Church who openly condemned the actions of Metropolitan Sergius:

> ... Metropolitan Peter who, though arrested and banished, never renounced his rights as the legitimate first hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, *locum tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne; Metropolitan Agathangel, as the senior hierarch of the Russian Church, who was the deputy of the Patriarch; Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, first candidate as *locum tenens*, nominated to this post by Patriarch Tikhon; Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd, deputy to Metropolitan Peter; Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich, onetime deputy *locum tenens*; Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky), eminent fellow struggler of Patriarch Tikhon; Archbishop Pachomius of Chernigov, Archbishop Procopius of Kherson; Bishop Victor of Glazovsk, Bishop Barlaam of Perto; Bishop Eugene of Rostov; Bishop Damaskene of Glukhovsk; Bishop Basil of Priluky; Bishop Arsenius of Voronezh; Bishop Hierotheus of Nikolsk; Bishop Hilarion, vicar of the Smolensk Diocese; Bishop Demetrius of Gdovsk; Bishop Sergius of Navra; Bishop Maxilllus of Serpukhov; Bishop Paul of Novomoskovsk; Bishops Gabriel, Abercius, Nectarius, Theodore, Philip, Stephen, Peter, and others who were banished to internal exile and to concentration camps.
>
> Among the protesters, there were also many exceptional representatives of the priesthood, professors of theology, and lay Church activists: Fr. Pavel Florensky, the famous theologian and professor of the Moscow Theological Academy; Fr. Theodore Andreyev, professor of the Moscow Theological Academy; former president of the St. Petersburg Religious and Philosophical Society, the renowned Russian Philosopher Prof. S.A Askoldov; the philosopher A.A. Meyer, Prof. A.I. Brilliantov of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy; the well-known publisher of the Religious-Moral Library, Prof. M.A. Novoselov; the philosopher

A.F. Losev; professor of psychiatry V.N. Finne; senior lecturer at the St. Petersburg University, Deacon V. Finne; St. Petersburg University professors D.L Abramovich and V.L. Komarovich; professors of the Military Law Academy S.S. Abramovich-Baranovsky and A.N. Kolosov; the philosopher Dr. M.M. Marzhetsky; Fr. Alexander Sidorov, Fr. Sergius Mechov, Fr. Victorinus Dobronravov, Fr. Nicephorus Strelnikov, Fr. Nicholas Piskanovsky, Fr. Alexis Alexeev, Fr. Anatolius Zhurakovsky, Abbot Barsanuphius (Yurchenko), Archpriest Gregory Seletsky, Archpriest Anthony Kotovich and many others" (p. 51).

[v] According to facts cited in L. Regelson's book *The Tragedy of the Russian Church* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1977, pp. 578-579), Bishop Damaskin Tsedrik) was born in or about 1880. He graduated from seminary and the Institute of Oriental Languages in Kazan. He became a monk and worked as a missionary in the Peking Ecclesiastical Mission of the Russian Church. In 1919, he served in Kiev as a hieromonk. Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) knew him personally, held him in high regard, and even appointed him missionary in his diocese.

In 1923, Damascene was consecrated bishop in Moscow by Patriarch Tikhon. He was appointed bishop of Glukhovsk, vicar to the Chernigov Diocese. During the years 1923-1926, he was arrested repeatedly. In 1925, he lived in Moscow, was close to Metropolitan Peter and was arrested with him. At the close of 1928, after another arrest and release, he went to Moscow, where, on December 11, he met with Metropoiitan Sergius. After a lengthy discussion, Damascene severed all relations with Sergius.

Bishop Damascene was one of the organizers of the Catacomb Church. From November of 1929 to 1934, Bishop Damascene spent time in the Solovki prison. In 1934, he enjoyed several months of freedom, which time he spent organizing the Catacomb Church in southern Russia. In November of 1934, he was again arrested and was continuously transferred from prison camp to prison camp, first in the north, then in the south. During one of these transfers, he carried on his shoulders, from stop to stop, his exhausted spiritual son, Fr. John S., who might otherwise have been shot as a straggler. In 1935, Bishop Damascene was once again arrested in Kazakhstan and exiled to Siberia. They recount the particulars of his death (on 10 September 1943) as follows:

Well into autumn, they were waiting for the ferry on the banks of a large Siberian river. A certain priest, clad in a light cassock and shivering from the cold, was brought up. Bishop Damascene took off his own riassa and put it on

the priest, saying: "Let he who hath two garments give one to him who hath none." He then caught a cold on the ferry which for the next two days carried them on the next leg of their journey, and died.

[vi] It would be expedient to recall an episode involving the publication of a three-volume study of the history of the Russian Church by Deacon Vladimir Rusak, *Witness of the Prosecution: Church and State in the Soviet Union*. Having learned of the existence of this manuscript, Archbishop (presently Metropolitan) Pitirim tried to persuade the author to destroy his work. In 1983, in an Open Letter to the Sixth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, Canada, Fr. Vladimir Rusak wrote:

"It is difficult to recount with what tenacity he [Archbishop Pitirim - V.P.] tried to persuade me to completely destroy my work. I declined, and he simply fired me." Rusak was subsequently subjected to persecutions, arrested and convicted on Sept. 27,1986 to twelve years of prison for anti-Soviet propaganda and agitation. *Witness of the Prosecution* was, nevertheless, printed by a publisher in the West in 1987.

[vii] It is currently fashionable in Church circles to criticize Fr. Gleb Yakunin for his involvement in Russian politics. Let us, however, not forget the nearly thirty years of dedication to the defense of religious and human rights of this courageous priest, which began with his famous "Open Letter" in 1965 (coauthored by the late Fr. N. Eshlimann) to the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate. Certainly, for the Moscow Patriarchate the activities of Fr. Gleb are rather disagreeable, for all that he has done and continues to do is contrary to its official policies. Fr. Gleb has paid a dear price for defending the rights of believers and for criticizing the Moscow Patriarchate - first by a twenty-year suspension from the priesthood, and then by a ten-year term of imprisonment. In his pre-sentencing speech (Aug. 27, 1980), Fr. Gleb said that in his activities he only performed the duties of an Orthodox priest and that he was grateful to the Lord for the suffering sent him: "I consider my suffering a great honor and my Christian duty".

The Moscow weekly *Kuranty* (No. 70, April 10, 1992, p. 12) published an interview with Fr. Gleb in which he said of his participation in the political life of the country thus:

> "Presently we are experiencing a transitory period. And while the fate of society is on the scales, my share in the political life is very well justified. Moreover, it is my duty .... By taking part in the work of Parliament as a people's deputy, I am primarily trying to support the Church to the best of my ability. For seven decades the totalitarian state

had suppressed and enslaved the Church. Now in the newly emerging situation, we are the statesmen of Russia, so we have to generate legislation enabling the Church to occupy its proper place in society."

[viii] Nezavisimaya Gazeta (The Independent Gazette, April 7, 1992) reported the following:

> "When the commission's membership was being determined, Archbishop Chrysostom of Lithuania and Vilnius, who was well known for his principled political position as early as January of 1991, was from the time of the attempted Communist coup d'etat blackballed and excluded from it." Incidentally, in an interview about churchmen as agents of the KGB, Archbishop Chrysostom said: " ... There are in the Church genuine KGB agents who have reached dizzying heights in their career. For example, Metropolitan Methodius of Voronezh [agent "Pavel" - V.P.] He is a KGB officer, an atheist, a depraved man, closely tied to the KGB. The Synod was unanimously against such a bishop, but we had to take upon ourselves such a sin; and afterwards, how his career soared! He became - a metropolitan, and barely ten years passed and he was in charge of the Church's funds millions! -and was president of the financial administration. He has never had any respect for independent, honorable priests; he has not defended them, but has only driven them out [Russkaya Mysl' April 24, 1992, p.8].

[ix] In May of 1991, the text of the prophecy of St. Seraphim of Sarov was given to the author by Alexis Petrovich Artsibushev, a native of the village of Diveyevo and a collaborator in the restoration of the Diveyevo Convent, which had been established by St. Seraphim of Sarov. Artsibushev's grandfather was a benefactor of the convent, at which two of his daughters received the monastic tonsure. After the death of Artsibushev's father, his mother secretly took the tonsure, receiving the name Thais. Her reminiscences were published in the almanac *The Past*, in Paris in 1988. After Metropolitan Sergius issued his Declaration, the nun Thais entered the Catacomb Church and took an active role in its life. In a letter to the author of this article, Alexis Petrovich Artsibushev writes, in part:

> ... E.I. Motovilova [the wife of the man with whom St. Seraphim had his famous conversation on the acquisition of the Holy Spirit - V.P.] went through her husband's voluminous notes and collected the prophecies, sayings and foretellings of St. Seraphim, especially those which concerned the fate of Russia and the times preceding and following the coming of the Antichrist. In the notes this is carefully gone over. The original of these notes, a photocopy of which is in

your possession, was found after the repose of a certain elder Sergius (Orlov), a secret schema-monk of very high spiritual attainments, who honored the holy shrines of Diveyevo and from the moment of the convent's closing assembled, with the help of his sister, icons and all possible ecclesiastical articles for a time when the convent would open again. He knew me when I was still a boy in Diveyevo, and many years later. We were brought together again not long before his death. In his archives the very notes of which I sent you a photocopy were discovered, nearly falling apart from age and decay ... I believe that in the West there is no document as powerful as the prophecy of St. Seraphim concerning the fate of Russia, which has been completely fulfilled, and is still being fulfilled, before our very eyes. [...] In them [i.e., the notes] the saint indicates the path taken by Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church for more than a hundred years, indicates the reasons for its sufferings, and through them the way to great glory.]

[x] The Paris-based journal *Vestnik RSKhD* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement) (Nos. 87-88,1968, pp. 4-7; 15-17) reports the following biographical information on Archbishop Ermogen: Born in 1895, educated at the Moscow Theological Academy. In 1920, he took monastic vows and was ordained priest-monk by Patriarch Tikhon himself. In 1923, he was elevated to the rank of archimandrite and appointed superior of the Kiev-Caves Lavra. In1931, Archimandrite Ermogen was arrested and sentenced to prison camp for 10 years. Upon completing his term, he settled in Central Asia. In the early 1950s, he served as priest in Samarkand. In 1953, he was ordained bishop of Tashkent and Central Asia. The address delivered by him at his consecration is characteristic of the splendid personality of this courageous pastor: "I am happy to be able to testify before the whole Church that my past is in God. For the Lord, even in the days of my youth, I rejected much that attracts man in this world. My will served Him. And even if sinned as a man, yet have 1 never turned my back on Him, my Lord; I have always been faithful to His Holy Church and my arm has never been stretched out to any alien god."

Vladyka Ermogen became a bishop before Stalin's death. The last bishop appointed during the era of cruel dictatorship, he became, as it were, an apostle of destalinization with regard to the relations between the Church and the state. Under the Khrushchev government, particularly during 1959 and 1960, in accordance with an official directive, the local authorities began to destroy the structure of the Church. For his vigorous defense of the Faith, he was removed from the administration of his diocese. In 1962, he was appointed Archbishop of Kaluga. In 1964, he was the first to undertake a campaign for the liberation of the Church from the captivity by the godless

Soviet bureaucracy. In the summer of 1965, Archbishop Ermogen headed a delegation of eight bishops to Patriarch Alexis I, demanding the rescinding of the Council's decisions in view of their non-canonicity. For this action, Archbishop Ermogen was "persuaded" to go into retirement, and the Zhirovitsky Monastery was designated as place of residence.

Nevertheless, while in retirement, he spoke out repeatedly against the Moscow Patriarchate's policy of accommodation. After the death of Patriarch Alexis I, all the best forces of the Russian Church dreamed of Archbishop Ermogen's being elected Patriarch. However, Vladika Ermogen, who at that time was the most senior hierarch of the Russian Church, was not invited to the Council, and up to the time of his repose, on April 7, 1978, he remained under virtual house arrest.

[xi] Boris Vladimirovich Talantov was at that time a 65year-old teacher of mathematics, the son of a priest who perished in Stalin's camps, the author of several articles on the deplorable state of the Russian Orthodox Church.

A letter composed by him and signed by 12 believers from the Kirov District, was sent abroad and was broadcast by the BBC into the USSR. Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov), who managed the external relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, was questioned on this issue by the French newspaper *Humanite*. Metropolitan Nikodim stated that this letter was anonymous, and the facts concerning the oppression of the Church by the authorities presented in it did not coincide with reality. The local KGB tried to obtain from the authors of the letter confirmation of Metropolitan Nikodim's statement. The pressure was such that three of the signers died; the seminarian N. Kamenskikh was expelled from the seminary; but not a single signatory retracted his signature. Moreover, in an open letter, Talantov confirmed the validity of the facts testifying to the persecution of the Church, which were set forth in the letter of the twelve. In 1969, he was arrested, sentenced to three years imprisonment for "libel", and died in the prison hospital.

The struggle of Boris Talantov is also striking because he acted deep within provincial Russia, not in a major population center. Anatoly Levitin-Krasnov wrote about this at the time:

> "During those difficult times, when more than 10,000 churches were shut down within a period of two to three years (during Krushchev's regime), when each day brought more news of the latest acts of brigandage - at the Pochaev Monastery, in other monasteries of Moldavia and the Ukraine, - when newspapers and magazines were full of dirty slander levelled at the believers, and the hierarchs never

> budged, afraid to utter a word in defense of the Church: at that time a humble teacher from Vyatka was locked in a mortal struggle for the Church; he used his words, he waged war with his pen, writing lucid letters to all levels of government, denouncing the arbitrariness of the local authorities and the criminal permissiveness of the hierarchs. It was difficult for him, an old man. He was utterly alone in the province, there were no cultured people around, no courageous comrades-in-arms. For in the province people are more docile than in Moscow, the authorities are more independent, their arbitrariness more cynical (*Posev* Oct. 1969, *Drama v vyatke*, p. 6, in Russian).

[xii] In 1973, two years before the Assembly in Nairobi, Philip Potter, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, visited Moscow and met with representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate. In one of the KGB reports discovered by the Parliamentary Commission, one reads the following:

> "Visiting the USSR as a guest of the Moscow Patriarchate was Philip Potter, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, upon whom an advantageous ... influence has been achieved by agents "Sviatoslav", "Adamant," "Michailov," and "Ostrovsky". Operationally meaningful data have been obtained on the activities of the World Council of Churches." Head of the 4th Department of the 5th Directorate of the KGB, subsidiary to the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Lieutenant Kubishkin (DD. 10112, 1973, in Russian).

[xiii] In KGB archival documents it is recorded that "... among the religious delegation of the USSR ... [to the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver] ... 47 agents of the organs of the KGB were sent among the religious officials, clergymen and technical personnel." N.N. Romanov (p. 191, July, 1983). In other words, it is a fact that the entire delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate to the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches was in the service of the KGB!

[xiv] A Serbian theologian who exhaustively explains the Orthodox point of view on the problem of ecumenism in his book Orthodoxy and Ecumenism (Salonica, 1974). Ecumenism has also been described with extreme clarity by the First Hierarchs of the Russian Church Abroad, Metropolitan Philaret (in his two "Sorrowful Epistles") and Metropolitan Vitaly, and by Archbishop Averky (Taushev) in his many articles and sermons. See also the book by the American Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose) Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future, Platina, California, 1979).

[xv] To avoid false interpretations of this canon, we cite here the interpretation of the 15th canon by a canonist of the highest authority, Bishop Nicodemus of Dalmatia and Istria:

> ... If any of the bishops, metropolitans or patriarchs begin to preach some heretic doctrine contrary to Orthodoxy, then the rest of the clergy and ministers of the Church are justified in and even obligated to separate themselves immediately from the aforementioned bishop, metropolitan or patriarch, for which they are not only not subjected to any canonical punishment, but on the contrary, are to be deemed worthy of praise, for thereby they have not condemned or revolted against genuine, lawful bishops, but against false bishops, false teachers; and they have not thereby formed a schism within the Church, but on the contrary, as far as they were able have freed the Church from schism and averted division. Archimandrite John (later Bishop of Smolensk), in accordance with the historic circumstances of the Russian Church, notes quite correctly and in the strict sense of the canonical science, in his interpretation of this canon, that a priest will not be guilty, but rather worthy of praise, for separating from his bishop if the latter "preaches any heretical doctrine contrary to the Orthodox Church," and if a) he teaches a doctrine clearly opposed to the teaching of the Catholic Church and which has already been condemned by the Holy Fathers or Councils, and not any private speculation which might not be shown to anyone to be incorrect and which contain anything of importance so that it may be corrected without accusations of deliberate unorthodoxy;" and ifb) 'the false teaching is preached [by him] openly, before the people in church, when, i.e., it is already carefully thought out and is intended as a blatant contradiction of the Church, and not merely uttered privately, when while in this private way it may yet be reproved and renounced, without destroying the peace of the Church "' [*Pravila Pravoslanoi Tserkvi s tolknovaniami,* [St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg Theological Academy, 1912], vol. H, pp. 308-390], (in Russian)].

[xvi] Translated by Proto deacon Christopher Birchall, in The Life of Our Holy Father Maximus the Confessor [Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1982], pp37-39.

Translation from the Original Russian and serialized in *Living Orthodoxy*, Issues 88, 89, 94, 99 and 102.

Editors Note

As of 2024, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia has still unfortunately succumbed to the false union with the Moscow Patriarchate that occurred in 2007. Regrettably, Father Victor Potapov was one of the primary instigators of this capitulation and one of the strongest supporters of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Interestingly, Father Victor consistently writes against Patriarch Sergius and those bishops who "grovel before Stalin." However, since this false union, the Soviet Moscow Patriarchate bishops have continued to praise the former leaders of the USSR, venerate Metropolitan Sergius as a pseudo-patriarch, and even erect statues and commemorate icons of all the aforementioned figures. Moreover, Father Victor regularly condemns the heresy of ecumenism, yet ultimately capitulated to the Moscow Patriarchate, which remains an active participant in the ecumenical movement and is a full member of the World Council of Churches.

Another point worth mentioning that clearly demonstrates his capitulation is that in 1988, while on a trip to the USSR, Father Victor obtained relics of Saint Basil of Kineshma and had them installed in the altar of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Washington, D.C., during the cathedral's consecration. However, in December 2012, the Moscow Patriarchate "de-canonized" Saint Basil. Now, Father Victor has relics of a de-canonized saint in his cathedral's altar and a painted icon in the nave of the church. Father Victor has never protested this move by the Moscow Patriarchate but has silently gone along with it.

At one point, Father Victor Potapov was truly a priest of the Russian Church Abroad. However, we must wonder what happened to this clergyman that caused him to abandon his confession of Orthodoxy and become one of the groveling individuals he originally wrote against in the early 1990s.

Русская Православная Церковь

Журнал Московской Патриархии

РУССКАЯ ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ ЦЕРКОВЬ
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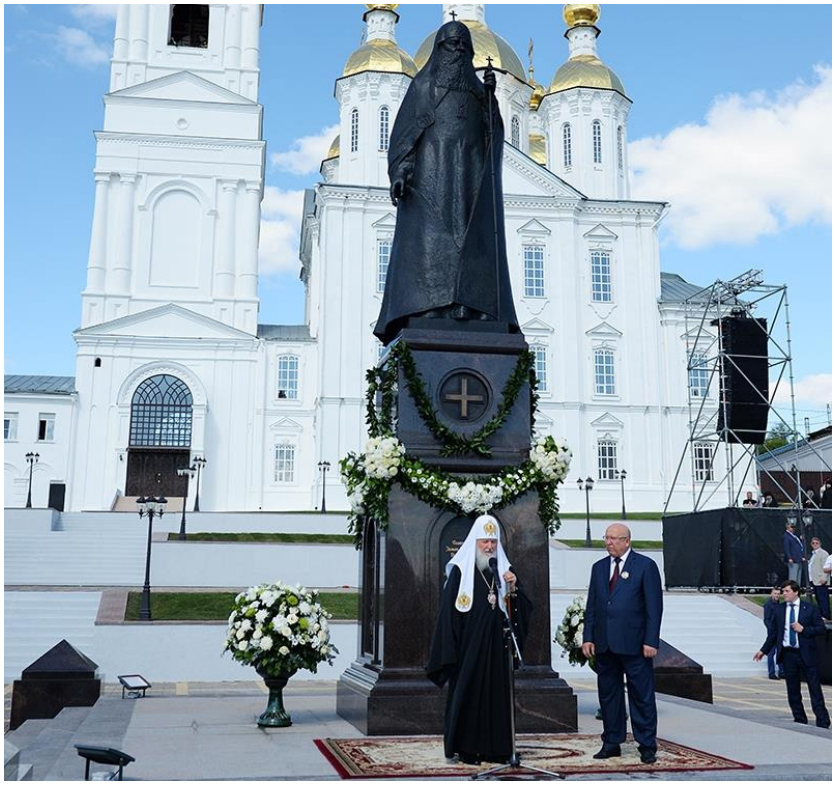

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СВ.
БЛГ.
ПРАВИТЕЛЬ ІОСИФЪ
БЛЖ
МАТРѠНА

Russian President Vladimir Putin and former Premier of the Soviet Union Joseph Stalin are honored on mosaics originally meant to feature on the church's walls.